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THE MAROON.

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THE MAROON.

BY

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"THE RIFLE RANGERS," "THE SCALP HUNTERS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE MAROON.

PROLOGUE.

THE "LAND OF SPRINGS."

WANDERING like a waif through the West-India islands, chance conducted me into Montego Bay, on the north-western coast of Jamaica.

I beheld a noble bay, of semi-circular shape, girt with lofty wooded hills, sweeping like a crescent around it. In the concavity of this crescent appeared the town—its white walls and "jalousied" windows gleaming cheerfully through a frondage of tropical trees, where mingled the foliage of palms and plantains, citrons and cecropias, pawpaw and palma-christi. On the declivities of the hills, trending up into the interior, I could see the sugar

"estate," the coffee "plantation," and the "penn" of the cattle-breeder—the *great house* of each placed in a commanding position, flanked by shaded verandahs, embowered amidst orange groves, and surrounded by perfumed forests of the indigenous allspice.

So silent and tranquil was the scene, that, gazing upon the town of Montego Bay, I might have fancied it a quiet country village, but for some tall masts that, crossing the horizontal line of the landscape, proclaimed it a seaport.

There was not above a score of these tapering sticks; and this limited number, combined with the absence of all movement upon the waters of the bay—our own ship the only one that entered, or went out—instead of proving the prosperity of the place, argued rather its decay.

Had I entered that port but half a century sooner, I should have witnessed a far different spectacle. I should have beheld a hundred ships moored by the wharfs, or anchored in the harbour; others standing in and out, or under full sail in the offing—boats and barges rowed rapidly to and fro—crowds of men hurrying along the beach—in short, a scene

of active, busy life, such as is usually presented on the seaward side of a prosperous port.

That was a period of grand, intellectual activity, perhaps unparalleled in the history of our race: when the heart of Christendom had become swollen to bursting with wild aspirations for liberty; when the souls of men, overcharged, as it were, with electricity—like the internal fires of the earthquake, long gathering for a mighty shock—became roused to make those gigantic throes in the cause of freedom that broke many a bond upon both sides of the Atlantic.

Equally was it a period of great commercial enterprise—in Jamaica, as elsewhere. But there, and then, mercantile prosperity had reached its maximum. A crisis had arrived, to be followed soon after by quick decadence.

And who need lament the downfall of a commerce whose most important commodity was *human flesh?* Rather let humanity rejoice at its ruin!

As our ship forged nearer to the shore, and the outline of individual objects could be distinguished, the scene became still more interesting.

The living forms of men and animals moving along the beach, or in the fields near by; the varied and gay-coloured costumes; the brilliant hues of the tropical foliage; the graceful symmetry of the palms and pawpaws; all entered into the composition of a landscape that deserved the designation of *lovely*.

My eye dwelt not long on these objects. Far more attractive to it were some blue peaks just visible in the distance—outlined against the yet bluer sky—and which I knew to be the mountains of Trelawney.

It was not the mountains themselves that were the sources of this attraction—much as I love to look upon those, the grandest of earth's features. I had been too long gazing upon the Cordilleras of the Andes to be stirred by a sight of the "Blue Mountains" of Jamaica. But about these there hung a history, which, though less known to the world, was not the less attractive to me—in romantic interest equalling, if not surpassing, that which attaches to the vanished halls of the Moctezumas, or the ruined palaces of the Peruvian Incas.

Of all the varied races and nations of men who have figured in the annals of the New

World, there is none whose history possesses for me so powerful an attraction as that of the *Maroons of Jamaica.*

No lover of liberty—no advocate for the equality of mankind—can fail to feel an enthusiastic admiration for those brave black men, who, for two hundred years, maintained their independence against the whole white population of the island.

Gazing upon the Trelawney mountains, I could not help recalling the history of these intrepid *hog-hunters.* Among those far hills had they their homes. There stood the scattered cabins of their mountain town—each embowered in its little grove of bananas. There, in time of peace, under the shadow of the tamarind, might have been seen the dark-skinned mothers, surrounded by their sable offspring—training them to emulate the exploits of their fathers—the fathers themselves away in the far forest, pursuing the savage boar. There, in the still tropic evening, might have been witnessed cheerful groups in front of their picturesque dwellings, listening to some warlike Coromantee song, or the more melancholy lay of the Ebo—perhaps dancing the

Congo dance, to the stirring sounds of the *goombay* and *merriwang*.

There, too, when war was forced upon them, lay the scene of their valorous achievements. There were the "cockpits," those curious natural fortresses they so successfully defended against ten times their number of assailants—every path leading to them deluged by the blood of their foiled foemen—every ravine consecrated by deeds of chivalric emprise, that vie with those of any age or clime.

Boast not of Thermopylæ—talk not of Tell and the field of Grutli—and be silent about the Maroons of Jamaica. In that little band, who for two centuries independently trod the Blue Mountains of Jamaica were heroes as worthy of world renown as those either of Sparta or of Switzerland.

The Maroons were never conquered. Their proud spirits never knew the ignominy of defeat.

With the history of these unique people fresh in my memory, no wonder that my eyes were attracted to the Trelawney hills; nor is it strange that my steps should be directed thither, almost on the instant of my setting foot upon the soil of Jamaica.

I went not only to drink from the sweet fountain of the historic past; but to ascertain whether, among the scenes rendered sacred by their deeds of heroism, there still existed any remnants of this remarkable race.

I was not disappointed.

In the wild mountains of Trelawney, I found that neither the Maroons nor their memory had passed into oblivion. Though no longer regarded as a distinct people—for the act of Emancipation had removed the barrier between them and the other blacks of the island—I met with many of their descendants.

I was even so fortunate as to meet with one of their veritable fathers—a true typical Maroon—a white-woolled veteran, of three-score and ten, who had been one of their boldest warriors.

Contemplating the still massive remains of a man, almost gigantic in size, I could easily believe him to have been the hero of many a powerful exploit. I could not help thinking what must have been the grandeur of the edifice represented by such a ruin.

A queer encounter—not necessary to be here described—brought me in contact with

this singular heptagenarian, and made me the welcome guest of his mountain home; where more than one conversation passed between us on the affairs of the olden time—a theme interesting to him as to myself.

In addition to many other adventurous incidents which I had from the mouth of the ancient Maroon, I am indebted to him for the details of the story now presented; and, if the reader should feel gratified by its perusal, his thanks will be less due to me than to the venerable *Quaco*.

CHAPTER I.

A JAMAICA SUGAR ESTATE.

A SUGAR estate, and one of the finest in the "land of springs," is that of "Mount Welcome."

It is situated about ten miles from Montego Bay, in a broad valley, between two rounded ridges. These ridges, after running parallel for more than a mile, and gradually increasing in elevation, at length converge with an inward sweep—at their point of convergence, rising abruptly into a stupendous hill, that fairly merits the name which it bears upon the estate—*the 'mountain.'*

Both the ridges are wooded almost down to their bases; the woods, which consist of shining pimento trees, ending on each side in groves and island copses, pleasantly interspersed over a park-like greensward.

The "great house" or "buff" of the estate stands under the foot of the mountain, just at

the point of union between the two ridges—where a natural table or platform, elevated several feet above the level of the valley, had offered a tempting site to the builder.

In architectural style it is not very different from other houses of its kind, the well-known planter's dwelling of the West Indies. One storey—the lower one, of course—is of strong stone mason-work; the second and only other being simply a wooden "frame" roofed with "shingles."

The side and end walls of this second story cannot with propriety be termed walls: since most part of them are occupied by a continuous line of Venetian shutters—the "jalousies" of Jamaica.

These impart a singular cage-like appearance to the house, at the same time contributing to its coolness—a quality of primary importance in a tropical climate.

Outside in the front centre a flight of broad stone steps, resting upon arched mason-work, and bordered by strong iron balustrades, conducts to the level of the second storey—the real dwelling-house: since the ground-floor is entirely occupied by store-rooms and other "offices."

The entrance door is from the landing of the aforesaid *escalier*, and conducts at once into the "hall"—a spacious apartment, of crucifix-shape, running clear across the building from side to side, and end to end. The current of air admitted by the open jalousies, passing constantly through this apartment, renders it at all times delightfully cool; while the lattice-work serves to mellow the glare of light, which, under the sky of the tropics, is almost as disagreeable as the heat. An uncarpeted floor, composed of the hardest sorts of native wood, and subjected to a diurnal polish, contributes to increase the coolness.

This great hall is the principal apartment of the dwelling. It is dining and drawing-room in one—where side-boards and cheffoniers may be seen in juxta-position with lounge chairs, fauteuils, and ottomans—a grand chandelier in the centre extending its branches over all.

The bed-chambers occupy the square spaces to one side of the cross; and these also have their jalousied windows to admit the air, and exclude, as much as possible, the sultry rays of the sun.

In Mount Welcome House, as in all other country mansions of Jamaica, a stranger

would remark a want of correspondence between the dwelling itself and the furniture which it contains. The former might be regarded as slight, and even flimsy. But it is this very character which renders it appropriate to the climate, and hence the absence of substantiality or costliness in the style and materials of the building.

The furniture, on the other hand—the solid tables of mahogany, and other ornamental woods—the shining carved side-boards—the profuse show of silver and cut glass that rests upon them—the elegant couches and chairs—the glittering lamps and candelabras—all combine to prove that the *quasi* meanness of the Jamaica planter's establishment extends no farther than to the walls of his house. If the case be a cheap one, the jewels contained in it are of the costliest kind.

Outside, the great house of Mount Welcome looks grand enough. Its broad façade, in which the deep green of the jalousies contrasts pleasantly with the white of the surrounding walls—the massive stone stair-way in front—the wooded mountain sweeping up and forming a back-ground of variegated green—the noble avenue of nearly a mile in length, with

its double rows of tamarinds and cocoa-palms, leading up in front from the lower end of the valley—all contribute to produce a picture of almost palatial grandeur.

Nor does a nearer view detract from the splendour of this picture. The platform on which the house is built affords space for a large garden and shrubbery, extending rearward to the mountain-foot, from which they are separated by a high wall of stone.

The *mountain* is a conspicuous feature of the landscape. Not so much from its height: for there are others of equal elevation near to it; and further off, though still within sight, many still higher. Even the famed "Blue Peak" is visible, towering hundreds of feet above the surrounding summits.

Nor is it conspicuous from being isolated. On the contrary, it is only a spur of that vast elevated chain of hills, that, separated by deep gorge-like valleys, and soaring thousands of feet above the level of the Caribbean Sea, are known as the "Blue Mountains of Jamaica."

Covering almost the entire area of the island—which is thus broken into an endless succession of gigantic corrugations—Jamaica presents a surface rough and irregular as the

crumplings upon a cabbage-leaf; and "land of mountains" would be a title as appropriate as its ancient Indian appellation, "the land of fountains."

The hill which overlooks the estate of Mount Welcome is less than two thousand feet above sea-level; but what renders it remarkable is the geometrical regularity of its outlines, and, still more, its singularly-shaped summit.

Viewed from the valley below, it presents the appearance of an exact and somewhat acute cone, up to within about fifty yards of its top. There the sloping outline ends—the line on each side thence trending vertically, and abruptly terminating in a square table-top, forty or fifty feet in diameter. In general appearance, this truncated summit is not unlike that of the famed "Cofre di Peroté" of Mexico.

The sloping sides of the mountain are densely wooded, especially that fronting the valley of Mount Welcome—towards which is presented a broad frowning *façade*, thickly clothed with a forest that appears primeval.

Alone at its top is it treeless—bare and bald as the crown of a Franciscan friar. There

stands the square coffer-like summit, a mass of solid rock, which repels the approach of the vegetable giants that crowd closely around its base, some of them stretching out their huge arms as if to strangle or embrace it.

One tree alone has succeeded in scaling its steep rampart-like wall. A noble palm—the *areca*—has accomplished this feat, and stands conspicuously upon the table-top, its plumed leaves waving haughtily aloft, like a triumphal banner planted upon the parapet of some conquered castle.

This summit rock presents a singular appearance. Its seamed and scarred surface is mottled with a dark glaze, which during the sunlight, and even under the mellower beams of the moon, gives forth a coruscation, as if the light were reflected from scale armour.

To the denizens of the valley below it is known as the *Jumbé Rock*—a name characteristic of the superstitious ideas attached to it. Though constantly before their eyes, and accessible by an hour's climbing up the forest path, there is not a negro on the estate of Mount Welcome, nor on any other for miles around, that would venture alone to visit the Jumbé rock; and to most, if not all of them,

the top of this mountain is as much of a *terra incognita* as the summit of Chimborazo!

I am speaking of a period more than half a century ago. At that time the terror, that was attached to the Jumbé Rock, did not altogether owe its origin to a mere superstition. It had been partly inspired by the remembrance of a horrid history. The rock had been the scene of an execution, which for cruel and cold-blooded barbarity rather deserves to be called a crime.

That table-summit, like the blood-stained temples of the Moctezumas, had been used as an altar, upon which a human sacrifice had been offered up. Not in times long past, neither by the sanguinary priesthood of Azteca, but by men of white skin and European race—their victim a black and an African.

This incident, illustrating Jamaica justice during the dark days of slavery, deserves to be given in detail.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYAL-MAN.

In the West Indies, a few years previous to the Emancipation, there was much agitation on the subject of *Obeah-ism*.

The practice of this horrid art had become appallingly common—so common that upon almost every extensive estate in the island there was a "professor" of it; in other words, an "Obeah man." "Professor," though often used in speaking of these charlatans, is not a correct title. To have *professed* it—at least in the hearing of the whites—would have been attended with peril: since it was punishable by the death penalty. *Practitioner* is a more appropriate appellation.

These mysterious doctors were almost always men—very rarely women—and usually natives of Africa. Universally were they persons of advanced age and hideous aspect: the uglier the more successful in the pursuit of their criminal calling.

There was a class of them distinguished as "myal-men," whose chief distinction consisted in their being able to *restore life to a dead body.*

Such was the belief of their ignorant fellow slaves, who little suspected that the defunct subject had been all the while only dormant, his death-like slumber secretly brought about by the myal-man himself, assisted by a prescription of the branched "calalue"—a species of *caladium.*

I cannot here enter into an explanation of the mysteries of Obi, which are simple enough *when understood.* I have met it in every land where it has been my lot to travel; and although it holds a more conspicuous place in the social life of the savage, it is also found in the bye-lanes of civilization.

The reader, who may have been mystified about its meaning, will perhaps understand what it is, when I tell him that the *obeah-man* of the West Indies is simply the counterpart of the "medicine man" of the North-American Indians, the "piuche" of the South, the "rain-maker" of the Cape, the "fetish man" of the Guinea coast, and known by as many other titles as there are tribes of uncivilized men.

It is the *first dawning of religion on the soul of the savage;* but even when its malignant spirit has become changed to a purer aspiration after eternal life, it still lingers amidst the haunts of ignorance, its original form almost unaltered—*witchcraft.*

To the statement above made—that on every large plantation there was an obeah-man—the estate of Mount Welcome was no exception. It, too, was blessed, or rather cursed, by a follower of the art, an old Coromantee negro—Chakra by name—a man whose fell and ferocious aspect could not have failed to make him one of the most popular of its practitioners.

Such, to his misfortune, had he become.

He had long been suspected of having poisoned his master, the former owner of the estate, who had made an abrupt and mysterious exit from the world. The fate of this man, however, was not much lamented, as he bore the reputation of being a cruel slave-master. The present proprietor of Mount Welcome had least reason to regret it: since it gave him possession of an estate he had long coveted.

It was greater chagrin to him, that since

entering upon the enjoyment of the property, several of his most valuable slaves had terminated their existence suddenly, and in a manner which could only be accounted for by the supposition that Obi had accomplished their destruction.

Chakra, the myal-man, was suspected of causing their deaths. He was arraigned and brought to trial.

His judges were three—three justices of the neighbourhood—for that number was sufficient to pass the death-sentence upon a slave. The president of the court was the man's own master—Loftus Vaughan, Esquire, proprietor of Mount Welcome, and *custos rotulorum* of the precinct.

The substance of the crime charged against Chakra was "practising the arts of Obi." The charge had no reference to the death of his former master.

The proofs were not very clear; but were deemed sufficiently so by the court to warrant a conviction.

Strange to say that of the three justices, the man's own master—the president of the court—appeared the most anxious to bring the trial to this termination. So anxious indeed,

that he used every effort to overrule the opinions of the other two: his superior position as *custos* giving him a certain power of controlling the decision. One of them had actually pronounced in favour of an acquittal; but after a whispering consultation with the custos, he retracted his former opinion, and gave his vote for the verdict.

There was a rumour at the time, that Loftus Vaughan, in this trial, was actuated by meaner motives than either a stern love of justice, or the desire to put down the practice of Obi. There was a whisper abroad of some secrets—family secrets—with which the 'Coromantee had become acquainted; some strange transaction, of which he was the sole living witness; and of such a character, that even the testimony of a negro would have been an inconvenience; and it was suspected that this, and not obeahism, was the crime for which Chakra had to answer with his life.

Whether this was true or not, the Coromantee was condemned to die.

The trial was not more irregular than the mode of execution, which these irresponsible justices thought fit to decree. It was almost as

whimsical as it was cruel towards the wretched criminal.

He was to be taken to the top of the Jumbé rock, chained to the palm tree, and there left to perish!

It may be asked why this singular mode of execution was selected. Why was he not hanged upon the scaffold, or burnt at the stake—a custom not unusual with condemned criminals of his kind?

The answer is easy. As already stated, at this particular period, much unpleasant feeling prevailed on the subject of obeah-ism. In almost every district mysterious deaths had occurred, and were occurring—not only of black slaves, but of white masters, and even mistresses—all attributed to the baneful influence of Obi.

The African demon was ubiquitous, but invisible. Everywhere could be witnessed his skeleton hand upon the wall, but nowhere himself. It had become necessary to make a conspicuous example of his worshippers. The voice of all planterdom called for it; and the myal-man, Chakra, was selected for that example—in the belief that his fearful fate

would terrify the votaries of the vile superstition to their very hearts' core.

The Jumbé rock suggested itself as the most appropriate place for the execution of the Coromantee. The terrors with which the place was already invested—added to those now to be inspired by the fearful form of punishment of which it was to be the scene—would exert a beneficial effect on the superstitious understandings of the slaves, and for ever destroy their belief in Obeah and Obboney.

Under this belief was the myal-man escorted up to the summit of the Jumbé rock; and, like a modern Prometheus, chained there.

No guards were placed near him—none were required to stay by the spot. His chains, and the terror inspired by the act, were deemed sufficient to prevent any interference with his fate.

In a few days, thirst and hunger, aided by the vultures, would perform the final and fatal ceremony—as surely as the rope of the hangman, or the axe of the executioner.

* * * * *

It was long before Loftus Vaughan ascended the mountain to ascertain the fate of the

unfortunate negro, his *ci-devant* slave. When, stimulated by curiosity, and, perhaps, a motive still stronger—he, at length, climbed to the top of the Jumbé rock, his hopes and expectations were alike confirmed. A skeleton, picked clean by the John-crows, hung suspended to the stem of the tree!

A rusty chain, warped around the bones, kept the skeleton in place.

Loftus Vaughan had no inclination to dwell long upon the spot. To him the sight was fearful. One glance, and he hurried away; but far more fearful—far more terrifying—was that which he saw, or fancied he saw, in passing homeward down the forest path—either the ghost of the myal-man, or the man himself!

CHAPTER III.

A JAMAICA DEJEUNER.

On a tranquil morning in the fair month of May—fair in Jamaica, as elsewhere on the earth—a large bell ringing in the great hall of Mount Welcome announced the hour of breakfast.

As yet there were no guests around the table, nor in the hall—only the black and coloured domestics, who, to the number of half-a-dozen, had just come up from the kitchen with trays and dishes containing the viands that were to compose the meal.

Though but two chairs were placed by the table—and the disposition of the plates, knives, and forks indicated that it had been set for only that number of guests—the profusion of dishes, thickly covering the snow-white damask cloth, might have led to the belief that a large party was expected.

It was emphatically a *dejeúner à la fourchette.* There were cutlets plain, and with *sauce piquante,*

cavished fish, *entrées* of devilled fowl and duck, broiled salmon, and the like. These *hors d'œuvres* were placed around the table, while a cold ham on one dish, and a tongue on another, occupied the centre.

Of "bread kind" there were mealy yams—some mashed with milk and butter, and dished up in shapes—roast plantains, hot rolls, toast, cassada cakes, and sweet potatoes.

But that a splendid silver tea-service, and a large glittering urn were conspicuous, the spread might have been mistaken for a dinner, rather than the matutinal meal. The hour—nine o'clock A.M.—also precluded the idea of its being dinner.

Whoever were to be the guests at this table, it was intended they should fare sumptuously. So did they every day of their lives; for there was nothing occasional in that morning's meal. Both the style and the profuseness were of diurnal occurrence—the mode of Jamaica.

Soon after the tones of the bell had ceased to vibrate through the hall, they for whom the summons was intended made their appearance—entering from opposite sides, not together, but one coming in a little before the other.

The first was a gentleman of somewhat over middle age, of a hale complexion, and full, portly form.

He was dressed in a suit of nankeens—jacket and trousers, both of ample make—the former open in front, and displaying a shirt bosom of finest white linen, the broad plaits of which were uncovered by any vest. A wide turn-down collar was folded back, exhibiting a full development of throat—which, with the broad jaws of ruddy hue, appeared clean and freshly shaven.

From a fob in the waistband of his trousers hung a massive gold chain, with a bunch of seals and watch-keys at one end; while at the other was an immense chronometer watch of the old-fashioned "guinea gold," with white dial, upon which the black figures were conspicuously painted. The watch itself could be seen; as, on entering, the wearer had drawn it out of its fob with a view of ascertaining whether his servants were punctual to the minute: for the gentleman in question was a very martinet in such matters.

Loftus Vaughan, Esq., proprietor of Mount Welcome,—Justice of the Peace, and *Custos Rotulorum*,—was the man thus characterized.

After casting a scrutinizing glance at the display of viands, and apparently satisfied with what he saw, the master of Mount Welcome seated himself before the table, his face beaming with a smile of pleasant anticipation.

He had scarce taken his seat when a fair apparition appeared entering from the further end of the hall—a young virgin-like creature, looking as fresh and roseate as the first rays of the Aurora.

She was habited in a dress, or rather an undress, of purest white: a morning wrapper of fine lawn, that, fitting closely behind, displayed the waving *contour* of her back. In front, the dress fell in loose folds—scarce, however, concealing the full, bold outlines of her bosom; and then draped gracefully downward, so low as to leave nothing visible but the tips of a pair of tiny satin slippers, alternately showing themselves like white mice as the young girl glided over the polished surface of the floor.

Her throat, full and finely rounded, was encircled with a string of amber beads; and a crimson blossom—the beautiful bell of the Quamoclit—glittered amidst the ample folds of her hair. This, of a rich chestnut colour, was parted on her forehead, and carried in a

curving sweep over cheeks that rivalled the radiance of the flower.

It would have required an experienced eye —one well acquainted with the physiological characteristics of race—to have told that that young girl was not of the purest Caucasian blood. And yet the slight undulation of the hair; a rotund rather than an oval face; eyes of darkest umber, with a light gleaming perpetually in the pupils; a singular picture-like expression in the colouring of the cheeks —were all characteristics, that proclaimed the presence of the *sang-mêlée*.

Slight indeed was the *taint;* and it seems like profanation to employ the phrase, when speaking of a creature so beautifully fair—for beautifully fair was the daughter of Loftus Vaughan. She was his only daughter—the only member of his family: for the proprietor of Mount Welcome was a widower.

On entering the hall, the young girl did not proceed directly to seat herself; but, gliding behind the chair occupied by her father, she flung her arms around his neck, and imprinted a kiss upon his forehead.

It was her usual matutinal salute; and

proved that on that morning they had met for the first time.

Not that it was the first appearance of either: for both had been much earlier abroad —up with the sun, indeed, as is the universal custom in Jamaica.

Mr. Vaughan had entered the hall from the front door, and the broad-brimmed Leghorn hat, and cane carried in his hand, told that he had been out for a walk—perhaps to inspect the labour going on at the "works," or ascertain the progress made in the cultivation of his extensive cane-fields.

His daughter, on the contrary, might have been seen entering the house some half-hour before, in riding costume—hat, habit, and whip—proving that her morning exercise had been taken on horseback.

After saluting her father as described, the young girl took her seat in front of the coffee urn, and commenced performing the duties of the table.

In this she was assisted by a girl apparently of her own age, but of widely-different appearance. Her waiting-maid it was, who, having entered at the same time, had taken

her station behind the chair of her mistress.

There was something strikingly peculiar in the aspect of this personage—as well in her figure as in the colour of her skin. She was of that slender classic shape which we find in antique sculptures—like the forms of the Hindoo women known in England as "ayahs" and differing altogether from the negro outline. Her complexion, too, was not that of a negress —still less of a mulatta or quadroon. It was an admixture of black and red, resulting in a chestnut or mahogany colour; which, with the deep damask tincture upon her cheeks, produced an impression not unpleasing.

Nor were the features at all of a negro type. On the contrary, far removed from it. The lips were thin, the face oval, and the nose of an aquiline shape—such features as may be traced on Egyptian sculptured stones, or may be seen in living forms in the lands of the Arab.

Her hair was not woolly, though it differed altogether from the hair of a European. It was straight, and jet black, yet scarcely reaching to her shoulders. Not that it had been shortened by the scissors: for it appeared to

be at its fullest growth; and, hanging, as it did, loosely over her ears, it imparted a youthful appearance to the brown-skinned damsel.

The girl was far from ill-looking; and, to an eye accustomed to her "style," she may have appeared even handsome. Her elegant shape, exposed by the extreme scantiness of her costume—a sleeveless robe, with a Madras kerchief worn *à la toque* upon her head—her graceful attitudes, which seemed natural to her, either when in motion or standing poised behind the chair of her mistress; the quick glance of her fine, fiery eyes; and the pearl-like whiteness of her teeth; all contributed to make up a picture that was far from commonplace.

This young girl was a slave—the slave *Yola*.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO LETTERS.

INSTEAD of standing in the middle of the floor, the breakfast table had been placed close to the front window—in order that, with the jalousies thrown open, the fresh air might be more freely felt, while at the same time a view could be obtained of the landscape outside. A splendid view it was, comprising the valley with its long palm-shaded avenue, a reach of the Montego river, the roofs and spires of the town, the shipping in the bay and roadstead, the bay itself, and the blue Caribbean beyond.

Striking as was this landscape, Mr. Vaughan just then showed no inclination to look upon it. He was too busily occupied with the rich viands upon the table; and when he at length found time to glance over the window-sill, his glance extended no further than to the negro "gang" at work among the canes—to see if his drivers were doing their duty.

The eyes of Miss Vaughan were oftener directed to the outside view. It was at this hour that one of the servants usually returned from Montego Bay, bringing the letters from the post-office. There was nothing in her manner that betrayed any particular anxiety about his arrival; but simply that lively interest which young ladies in all countries feel when expecting the postman—hoping for one of those little letters of twelve sheets with closely-written and crossed lines, most difficult to decipher, and yet to them more interesting than even the pages of the newest novel.

Very soon a dark object, of rudely Centaurean form, appeared coming along the avenue; and, shortly after, an imp-like negro lad upon the back of a rough pony galloped up to the front entrance. This was Quashie—the post-boy, of Mount Welcome.

If Miss Vaughan expected a billet, she was doomed to disappointment. There were only two letters in the bag, with a newspaper; and all three were for the Custos himself.

All bore the English post-mark; and the superscription of one of the letters was by him at once recognized—a pleasant smile

stealing over his features as he broke open the seal.

A few moments sufficed to make him master of its contents, when the smile increased to a look of vivid gratification; and, rising from his chair, he paced for some time back and forward, snapping his fingers, and ejaculating, "Good—good! I thought so!"

His daughter regarded this behaviour with surprise. Gravity was her father's habit, at times amounting to austerity. Such an exhibition of gaiety was rare with Loftus Vaughan.

"Some pleasing news, papa?"

"Yes, you little rogue; very."

"May I not hear it?"

"Yes—no—no—not yet awhile."

"Papa! It is cruel of you to keep it from me. I promise I shall share your joy."

"Ah! you will when you hear the news—that is, if you're not a little simpleton, Kate."

"I a simpleton, papa? I shall not be called so."

"Why, you'll be a simpleton if you don't be joyful—when you—never mind, child—I'll tell you all about it by-and-by. Good, good!"

continued he, in a state of ecstatic frenzy. "I thought so—I knew he would come."

"Then you expect some one, papa?"

"I do. Guess who it is!"

"How could I? You know I am unacquainted with your English friends."

"Not with their names? You have heard their names, and seen letters from some of them?"

"Oh, yes, I often hear you speak of one—Mr. Smythje. A very odd name it is! I wouldn't be called Smythje for the world."

"Ta, ta, child! Smythje is a very pretty name, especially with Montagu before it. Montagu is magnificent. Besides, Mr. Smythje is the owner of Montagu Castle."

"Oh, papa! how can that make his name sound any better? Is it he whom you expect?"

"Yes, dear. He writes to say that he will come by the next ship—the *Sea Nymph* she is called. She was to sail a week after the letter was written, so that we may look out for his arrival in a few days. Gad! I must prepare for him. You know Montagu Castle is out of repair. He is to be my guest; and,

hark you, Catherine!" continued the planter, once more seating himself at the table, and bending towards his daughter, so that his *sotto voce* might not be overheard by the domestics, "you must do your best to entertain this young stranger. He is said to be an accomplished gentleman, and I know he is a rich one. It is to my interest to be friendly with him," added Mr. Vaughan, in a still lower tone of voice, and as if in soliloquy, but loud enough for his daughter to hear what was said.

"Dear papa!" was the reply, "how could I be otherwise than polite to him? If only for your sake——"

"If only for *your own*," said the father, interrupting her, and accompanying the remark with a sly look and laugh. "But, dear Catherine," continued he, "we shall find time to talk of this again. I must read the other letter. Who on earth can it be from? Egad! I never saw the writing before."

The announcement of the projected visit of Mr. Montagu Smythje, with the trumpet-like flourish of his many accomplishments—which Kate Vaughan had not now listened to for the first time—appeared to produce in the heart of the young lady no very vivid emotions of

pleasure. She received it with perfect indifference, not seeming to care much one way or the other. If there was a balance, it was rather against him: for it so chanced that much of what she had heard in relation to this gentleman was not at all calculated to prepossess her in his favour.

She had heard that he was an exquisite—a fop, in fact—perhaps of all other characters the one most repulsive to a young creole: for, notwithstanding the natural disposition of these to become enamoured of fine personal appearance, it must be accompanied by certain qualities of mind, if not of the highest morality, or even intellectuality, yet differing altogether from the frivolous accomplishments of mere dandyism.

Nature, that inspires the creole maiden to give her *whole heart away and without any reserve*, has also taught her to bestow it with judgment. Instinct warns her not to lay her precious offering upon an altar unworthy of the sacrifice.

There was another circumstance calculated to beget within the heart of Kate Vaughan a certain feeling of repulsion towards the lord of Montagu Castle; and that was the conduct

of her own father in regard to this matter. From time to time—when speaking of Mr. Montagu Smythje—he had made use of certain expressions and innuendoes, which, though couched in ambiguous language, his daughter very easily comprehended.

The heart of woman is quick, as it is subtle, in the understanding of all that relates to the disposal of itself; and this even at the earliest age of maidenhood. It is prone to repel any effort to guide it from its natural inclinings, or rob it of its right to choose.

Mr. Vaughan, in his ignorance of these rather recondite truths, was erecting a barrier to his own designs, all the while that he fancied he was successfully clearing the track of presumptive obstructions, and making the path smooth and easy.

At match-making he was likely to prove a bungler: for it was evident that match-making was in his mind.

"Never saw the handwriting before," said he, in repetition, as he broke open the seal of the second epistle.

If the contents of the first had filled him with joy, those of the second produced an effect directly the opposite.

"'Sdeath!" exclaimed he, crushing the letter, as he finished reading it, and once more nervously springing to his feet. "Dead or living, that ill-starred brother of mine seems as if created to be a curse to me! While alive, always wanting money; and now that he is dead sending his son—a never-do-well, like himself—to trouble, and, perhaps, disgrace me."

"Dear father!" said the young girl, startled more by his wild demeanour than what he was saying—for the words were muttered in a low voice, and rather in soliloquy—"has the other letter brought unpleasant news?"

"Ah! that it has. You may read for yourself."

And once more seating himself, he tossed the unwelcome epistle across the table, and recommenced eating with apparent voracity—as if by that means to tranquillize his perturbed spirit.

Kate took up the rejected letter; and, smoothing out the paper, ran her eye over the contents.

The perusal did not require much time: for considering that the letter had made such a

long journey, its contents were of the shortest:—

London, June 10, 18—.

"DEAR UNCLE,

I have to announce to you the melancholy intelligence that your brother, my dear father, is no more. His last words were, that I should go over to you: and, acting in accordance with his wish, I have taken passage for Jamaica. The ship is the *Sea Nymph*, and is to sail upon the 18th instant. I do not know how long we shall be at sea, but I hope it will prove a short voyage: as poor father's effects were all taken by the sheriff's officer, and I am compelled, for want of money, to take passage in the *steerage*, which I have been told is anything but a luxurious mode of travelling. But I am young and strong, and no doubt shall be able to endure it.

"Yours affectionately,

"HERBERT VAUGHAN."

Whatever effect the reading of the letter may have had upon Kate Vaughan, it certainly did not produce indignation. On the contrary, an expression of sympathy stole over her face as she mastered the contents of

the epistle; and on finishing it, the phrase, "poor fellow!" dropped as if involuntarily, and just audibly, from her lips.

Not that she knew anything of Herbert Vaughan, more than the name, and that he was her cousin; but the word *cousin* has an attractive sound, especially in the ears of young people, equalling in interest—at times even surpassing—that of sister or brother.

Though uttered, as we have said, in a tone almost inaudible, the words reached the ears of her father.

"Poor fellow!" he repeated, turning sharply to his daughter, and regarding her with a glance of displeasure, "I am surprised, Kate, to hear you speak in that strain of one you know nothing about—one who has done nothing to deserve your compassion. An idle, good-for-nothing fellow—just as his father was before him. And only to think of it—coming over here a *steerage* passenger, in the very same ship with Mr. Montagu Smythje! 'Sdeath! What a disgrace! Mr. Smythje will be certain to know who he is—though he is not likely to associate with such *canaille*. He cannot fail to notice the fellow, however; and when he sees him here, will

be sure to remember him. Ah! I must take some steps to prevent that. Poor fellow, indeed! Yes, poor enough, but not in that sense. Like his father, I suppose, who fiddled his life away among paint-brushes and palettes instead of following some profitable employment, and all for the sake of being called an *artist!* Poor fiddlestick! Bah! Don't let me hear you talk in that strain again!"

And as Mr. Vaughan ended his ill-natured harangue, he tore the wrapper off the newspaper, and endeavoured, among its contents, to distract his mind from dwelling longer on the unpleasant theme either of the epistle, or him who had written it.

The young girl, abashed and disconcerted by the unusual violence of the rebuke, sat with downcast eyes, and without making any reply. The red colour had deepened upon her cheeks, and mounted to her forehead; but, notwithstanding the outrage done to her feelings, it was easy to see that the sympathy she had expressed, for her poor but unknown cousin, was felt as sensibly as ever.

So far from having stifled or extinguished it, the behaviour of her father was more

likely to have given it increase and strength: for the adage of the "stolen waters" is still true; and the forbidden fruit is as tempting now as upon the morning of creation. As it was in the beginning, so will it ever be.

CHAPTER V.

THE SLAVER.

A HOT West-Indian sun was rapidly declining towards the Caribbean Sea—as if hastening to cool his fiery orb in the blue water—when a ship, that had rounded Pedro Point, in the Island of Jamaica, was seen standing eastward for Montego Bay.

She was a three-masted vessel—a barque—as could be told by the lateen rig of her mizen-mast—and apparently of some three or four hundred tons burden.

As she was running under one of the gentlest of breezes, all her canvas was spread; and the weather-worn appearance of her sails denoted that she was making land at the termination of a long ocean voyage. This was further manifest by the faded paint upon her sides, and the dark, dirt-coloured blotches that marked the position of her hawse-holes and scuppers.

Besides the private ensign that streamed,

pennon-like from her peak, another trailed over her taffrail; which, unfolded by the motion of the vessel, displayed a blue starry field with white and crimson stripes. In this case the flag was appropriate—that is, in its stripes and their colour. Though justly vaunted as the flag of the free, here was it covering a cargo of slaves: the ship was a *slaver*.

After getting fairly inside the bay, but still at a long distance from the town, she was observed suddenly to tack; and, instead of continuing on towards the harbour, head for a point on the southern side, where the shore was uninhabited and solitary.

On arriving within a mile of the land she took in sail, until every inch of canvas was furled upon her yards. Then the sharp rattling of the chain, as it dragged through the iron ring of the hawse-hole, announced the dropping of an anchor.

In a few moments after the ship swung round; and, drifting till the chain cable became taut, lay motionless upon the water.

The object for which the slaver had thus anchored short of the harbour will be learnt by our going aboard of her—though this was

a privilege not granted to the idle or curious. Only the initiated were permitted to witness the spectacle of which her decks now became the theatre: only those who had an interest in the disposal of her cargo.

Viewed from a distance, the slaver lay apparently inert; but for all that a scene of active life was passing upon her deck—a scene of rare and painful interest.

She carried a cargo of two hundred human beings—"bales," according to the phraseology of the slave-trader. These bales were not exactly alike. It was, as her skipper jocularly styled it, an "assorted cargo"—that is, one shipped on different points of the African coast, and, consequently, embracing many distinct varieties of the Ethiopian race. There was the tawny, but intelligent Mandingo, and by his side the Jolof of ebon hue. There the fierce and warlike Coromantee, alongside the docile and submissive Pawpaw; the yellow Ebo, with the visage of a baboon, wretched and desponding, face to face with the cannibal Moco, or chained wrist to wrist with the light-hearted native of Congo and Angola.

None, however, appeared of light heart on board the slaver. The horrors of the "middle

passage" had equally affected them all, until the dancing Congese, and the Lucumi, prone to suicide, seemed equally to suffer from dejection. The bright picture that now presented itself before their eyes—a landscape gleaming with all the gay colours of tropical vegetation—was viewed by them with very different emotions. Some seemed to regard it with indifference; others it reminded of their own African homes, from which they had been dragged by rude and ruffian men; while not a few gazed upon the scene with feelings of keen apprehension—believing it to be the dreaded *Koomi*, the land of the gigantic cannibals—and that they had been brought thither *to be eaten!*

Reflection might have convinced them that this would scarcely be the intention of the *Tobon-doo*—those white tyrants who had carried them across the ocean. The hard, unhusked rice, and coarse maize corn—their only food during the voyage—were not viands likely to fatten them for the feast of Anthropophagi; and their once smooth and shining skins now exhibited a dry, shrivelled appearance, from the surface coating of dandruff, and the scars of the hideous *cra-cra*.

The blacks among them, by the hardships of that fearful voyage, had turned ashy grey and the yellows of a sickly and bilious hue. Males and females—for there were many of the latter—appeared to have been alike the objects of ill-usage, the victims of a starved stomach and a stifled atmosphere.

Some half-dozen of the latter—seen in the precincts of the cabin—presented a different aspect. These were young girls, picked from the common crowd on account of the superiority of their personal charms; and the flaunting vestments that adorned their bodies —contrasting with the complete nudity of their fellow-voyagers—told too plainly why they had been thus distinguished. A horrid contrast—wantonness in the midst of woe!

On the quarter-deck stood the slave-skipper —a tall, lathy individual of sallow hue—and, beside him, his mate—a dark-bearded ruffian; while a score of like stamp, but lower grade, acting under their orders, were distributed in different parts of the ship.

These last, as they tramped to and fro over the deck, might be heard at intervals giving utterance to profane oaths—as often laying violent hands upon one or other of their un-

fortunate captives—apparently out of the sheer wantonness of cruelty!

Immediately after the anchor had been dropped, and the ropes belayed and coiled in their places, a new scene of this disgusting drama was entered upon. The living "bales," hitherto restrained below, were now ordered, or rather driven, upon deck—not all at once, but in lots of three or four at a time. Each individual, as he came up the hatchway, was rudely seized by a sailor, who stood by with a soft brush in his hand and a pail at his feet; the latter containing a black composition of gunpowder, lemon-juice, and palm-oil. Of this mixture the unresisting captive received a coating; which, by the hand of another sailor, was rubbed into the skin, and then polished with a "dandybrush," until the sable epidermis glistened like a newly-blacked boot.

A strange operation it might have appeared to those who saw it, had they not been initiated into its object and meaning. But to the spectators there present it was no uncommon sight. It was not the first time those unfeeling men had assisted at the spectacle of black bales *being made ready for the market!*

One after another were the dark-skinned

victims of human cupidity brought from below, and submitted to this demoniac anointment—to which one and all yielded with an appearance of patient resignation, like sheep under the hands of the shearer.

In the looks of many of them could be detected the traces of that apprehension felt in the first hours of their captivity, and which had not yet forsaken them. Might not this process be a prelude to some fearful sacrifice?

Even the females were not exempted from this disgusting desecration of God's image; and they too, one after another, were passed through the hands of the rough operators, with an accompaniment of brutal jests, and peals of ribald laughter!

CHAPTER VI.

JOWLER AND JESSURON.

ALMOST on the same instant that the slave-barque had dropped anchor, a small boat shot out from the silent shore; which, as soon as it had got fairly clear of the land, could be seen to be steering in the direction of the newly-anchored vessel.

There were three men in the boat—two of whom were plying the oars. These were both black men—naked, with the exception of dirty white trousers covering their limbs, and coarse palm-leaf hats upon their heads.

The third occupant of the skiff—for such was the character of the boat—was a white, or more properly, a *whitish* man. He was seated in the stern-sheets, with a tiller-rope in each hand; and steering the craft—as his elbows held a-kimbo, and the occasional motion of his arms testified. He bore not the slightest resemblance to the oarsmen, either in the colour of his skin, or the costume that

covered it. Indeed, it would not have been easy to have found his counterpart anywhere either on land or at sea.

He appeared to be about sixty years old—he might have been more or less—and had once been white; but long exposure to a West-Indian sun, combined with the numerous dirt-bedaubed creases and furrows in his skin, had darkened his complexion to the hue of leaf-tobacco.

His features, naturally of an angular shape, had become so narrowed and sharpened by age as to leave scarce anything in front; and to get a view of his face it was necessary to step to one side, and scan it *en profil.*

Thus viewed, there was breadth enough, and features of the most prominent character—including a nose like the claw of a lobster—a sharp, projecting chin—with a deep embayment between, marking the locality of the lips: the outline of all suggesting a great resemblance to the profile of a parrot, but still greater to that of a Jew—for such, in reality was its type.

When the mouth was opened in a smile—a rare occurrence, however—only two teeth could be detected within, standing far apart, like two

sentinels guarding the approach to the dark cavern within.

This singular countenance was lighted up by a pair of black, watery orbs, that glistened like the eyes of an otter; and eternally glistened, except when their owner was asleep—a condition in which it was said he was rarely or never caught.

The natural blackness of his eyes was rendered deeper by contrast with long white eyebrows running more than half-way around them, and meeting over the narrow ridge of the nose. Hair upon the head there was none—that is, none that was visible—a skull-cap of whitish cotton-stuff covering the whole crown, and coming down over both ears. Over this was a white beaver hat, whose worn nap and broken edges told of long service.

A pair of large green goggles, resting on the humped bridge of his nose, protected his eyes from the sun; though they might, perhaps, have been worn for another purpose—to conceal the villainous expression of the orbs that sparkled beneath them.

A sky-blue cloth coat, whitened by long wear, with metal buttons, once bright, now

changed to the hue of bronze; small-clothes of buff kerseymere glistening with grease; long stockings, and tarnished top-boots, made up the costume of this unique individual. A large blue cotton umbrella rested across his knees, as both hands were occupied in steering the skiff.

The portrait here given—or, perhaps, it should be styled profile—is that of Jacob Jessuron, the slave-merchant; an Israelite of Germanic breed, but one in whom—it would not have been truth to say—there was "no guile."

The two oarsmen were simply his slaves.

The little craft had put out from the shore—from a secluded spot at a distance from the town, but still within view of it. It was evidently making for the newly-anchored barque; and evidently rowed at its best speed. Indeed, the steersman appeared to be urging his blacks to the exertion of their utmost strength. From time to time he was seen to twist his body half round and look towards the town—as though he expected or dreaded to see a rival boat coming from that quarter, and was desirous to reach the barque ahead of her.

If such was his design it proved successful.

Although his little skiff was a considerable time in traversing the distance from shore to ship—a distance of at least a mile—he arrived at the point of his destination without any other boat making its appearance.

"Sheep ahoy!" shouted he, as the skiff was pulled up under the larboard quarter of the barque.

"Ay, ay!" responded a voice from above.

"Ish that Captain Showler I hearsh?"

"Hilloo! who's there?" interrogated some one on the quarter-deck; and the moment after, the sallow face of Captain Aminadab Jowler presented itself at the gangway.

"Ah! Mister Jessuron, that you, eh? Determined to have fust peep at my blackeys? Well! fust kim, fust served; that's my rule. Glad to see you, old fellow. How'd deo?"

"Fusht-rate!—fusht-rate! I hopsh you're the same yourshelf, Captain Showler. How ish you for cargo?"

"Fine, old boy! got a prime lot this time. All sizes, colours, and *sexes*, too; ha! ha! You can pick and choose to suit yourself, I reckin. Come! climb aboard, and squint your eye over 'em!"

The slave-merchant, thus invited, caught

hold of the rope-ladder let down for his accommodation; and scrambling up the ship's side with the agility of an old ape, stepped upon the deck of the slaver.

After some moments spent in hand-shaking and other forms of gratulation; proving that the trader and merchant were old friends—and as thick as two thieves could possibly be—the latter fixed the goggles more firmly on the ridge of his nose, and commenced his inspection of the "cargo."

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOOLAH PRINCE.

On the quarter-deck of the slaver, and near the "companion," stood a man of unique appearance—differing not only from the whites who composed the crew, but also from the blacks and browns who constituted the cargo.

His costume, attitude, and some other trivial circumstances, proclaimed him as belonging neither to one nor the other.

He had just stepped up from the cabin, and was lingering upon the quarter-deck.

Having the *entrée* of the first, and the privilege of remaining upon the second, he could not be one of the "bales" of this human merchandise; and yet both costume and complexion forbade the supposition that he was of the slaver's crew. Both denoted an African origin—though his features were not of a marked African type. Rather were they Asiatic, or, more correctly, Arabian; but, in some respects, differing also from Arab fea-

tures. In truth, they were almost European; but the complexion again negatived the idea that the individual in question belonged to any of the nationalities of Europe. His hue was that of a light Florentine bronze, with a tinge of chestnut.

He appeared to be about eighteen or nineteen years of age; with a person well proportioned, and possessing the following characteristics:—A fine arched eyebrow, spanning an eye full and rotund; a nose slightly aquiline; thin, well-modelled lips; white teeth—whiter from contrast with the dark shading on the upper lip—and over all an ample *chevelure* of jet-black hair, slightly curling, but not at all woolly.

In nothing did he differ more, from the dark-skinned helots of the hold, than in his costume. While none of these had any clothing upon their bodies, or next to none, he, on the contrary, was splendidly apparelled—his face, throat, arms, and limbs, from the knee to the ancle, being the only parts not covered by a garment.

A sort of sleeveless tunic of yellow satin, with a skirt that just reached below his knees, was bound around his waist by a scarf of crim-

son China crape, the ends of which, hanging still lower, were adorned with a fringe-work of gold. Over the left shoulder rested loosely another scarf of blue *burnous* cloth, concealing the arm over which it hung; while half hidden beneath its draping could be perceived a scimitar in its richly-chased scabbard, with a hilt of carved ivory. A turban on the head, and sandals of Kordofan leather upon the feet, completed his costume.

Notwithstanding the Asiatic character of the dress, and the resemblance of the wearer to those East Indians known as Lascars, he was a true African—though not of that type which we usually associate with the word, and which suggests a certain *negroism* of features. He was one of a people entirely distinct from the negro—the great nation of the Foolahs (Fellattas)—that race of shepherd warriors whose country extends from the confines of Darfur to the shores of the Atlantic—the lords of Sockatoo and Timbuctoo—those fanatic followers of the false prophet who conspired the death of Laing, and murdered Mungo Park upon the Quorra. Of such race was the individual who stood on the quarter-deck of the slaver.

He was not alone. Three or four others were around him, who also differed from the wretched creatures in the hold. But their dresses of more common material, as well as other circumstances, told that they were his inferiors in rank—in short, his attendants.

The humble mien with which they regarded him, and the watchful attention to his every look and gesture, proclaimed the habitual obedience to which they were accustomed; while the turbans which they wore, and their mode of salutation—the *salaam*—told of an obeisance Oriental and slavish.

To the richness of the young man's attire was added a certain haughtiness of mien that proclaimed him a person of rank—perhaps the chieftain of some African tribe.

And such, in reality, he was—a Foolah prince, from the banks of the Senegal.

There, neither his presence nor appearance would have attracted more than passing observation; but here, on the western side of the Atlantic, on board a slave-ship, both required explanation.

It was evident that he was not in the same category with his unfortunate countrymen "between decks"—doomed to perpetual cap-

tivity. There were no signs that he had been treated as a captive, but the contrary.

How, then, was his presence on board the slave barque to be accounted for? Was he a passenger? In what relationship did he stand to the people who surrounded him?

Such, though differently worded, were the interrogatories put by the slave-merchant, as, returning from the fore-deck, after completing his inspection of the cargo, his eyes for the first time fell upon the young Fellatta.

"Blesh my shtars, Captain Showler!" cried he, holding up both hands, and looking with astonishment at the turbaned individuals on the quarter-deck. "Blesh my shtars!" he repeated; "what ish all thish? S'help my Gott! theesh fellows are not shlaves, are they?"

"No, Mister Jessuron, no. They ain't slaves, not all on 'em ain't. That 'ere fine fellow, in silk and satin, air a owner o' slaves hisself. He air a prince."

"What dosh you say, Captin Showler? a prinshe?"

"Ye ain't 'stonished at that, air ye? 'Tain't the fust time I've had an African prince for a passenger. This yeer's his Royal Highness

the Prince Cingües, son o' the Grand Sultan of Foota-toro. The other fellows you see thar by him are his attendants—courteers as waits on him. That with the yellow turban's 'gold stick;' him in blue's 'silver stick;' an' t'other fellow's 'groom o' the chamber,' I s'pose."

"Sultan of Foota-toro!" exclaimed the slave-merchant, still holding up the blue umbrella in surprise; "King of the Cannibal Islandsh! Aha, a good shoke, Captain Showler! But, serious, mine friend, what for hash you tricked them out in this way? They won't fetch a joey more in the market for all theesh fine feathers."

"Seerus, Mister Jessuron, they're not for the market. I sw'ar to ye the fellur's a real Afrikin prince."

"African fiddleshtick!" echoed the slave-merchant with an incredulous shrug. "Come, worthy captin, what'sh the mashquerade about?"

"Not a bit of that, ole fellur! 'Sure ye the nigger's a prince, and my passenger—nothing more or less."

"S'help you gott, ish it so?"

"So help me that!" emphatically replied

the skipper. "It's just as I've told ye, Mister Jessuron."

"Blesh my soul!—a passenger, you shay?'

"Yes; and he's paid his passage, too—like a prince, as he is."

"But what's hish business here in Shamaica?"

"Ah! that's altogether a kewrious story, Mister Jessuron. You'll hardly guess his bizness, I reckon?"

"Lesh hear it, friend Showler."

"Well, then, the story air this: 'Bout twelve months ago an army o' Mandingoes attacked the town of Old Foota-toro, and, 'mong other plunder, carried off one o' his daughters—own sister to the young fellur you see there. They sold her to a West-India trader; who, in course, brought the girl over here to some o' the islands; which one ain't known. Old Foota-toro, like the rest o' 'em, thinks the slaves are all fetched to one place; and as he's half beside himself 'bout the loss of this gurl—she war his favourite, and a sort of a court belle among 'em—he's sent the brother to search her out, and get her back from whoever hez purchased her on this side. There's the hul story for you."

The expression that had been gathering on the countenance of the Jew, while this relation was being made to him, indicated something more than a common interest in the tale—something beyond mere curiosity. At the same time, he seemed as if trying to conceal any outward sign of emotion, by preserving, as much as possible, the rigidity of his features.

"Blesh my soul!" he exclaimed, as the skipper had concluded. "Ash I live, a wonderful shtory! But how ish he ever to find hish sister? He might ash well look for a needle in a hayshtack."

"Wall, that's true enough," replied the slave skipper. "As for that," added he, with an air of stoical indifference, "'tain't no business o' mine. My affair hez been to carry the young fellur acrost the Atlantic; an' I'm willin' to take him back on the same tarms, and at the same price, if he kin pay it."

"Did he pay you a goodsh price?" inquired the Jew, with evident interest in the answer.

"He paid like a prince, as I've told you. D'ye see that batch o' yellow Mandingoes by the windlass yonder?"

"Yesh—yesh!"

"Forty there air—all told."

"Well?"

"Twenty on 'em I'm to have for fetchin' him acrost. Cheap enough, ain't it?"

"Dirt sheep, friend Showler. The other twenty?"

"They are *his'n*. He's brought 'em with him to swop for the sister—when he finds her."

"Ah, yesh! if he finds the girl."

"In coorse, if he finds her."

"Ach!" exclaimed the Jew, with a significant shrug of his shoulders; "that will not be an easy bishness, Captin Showler."

"By Christopher Columbus, old fellow!" said the trader, apparently struck with an idea; "now I think of it, you might gie him some help in the findin' o' her. I know no man more likely than yourself to be able to pilot him. You know everybody in the island, I reckon. No doubt he will pay you well for your trouble. I'm raythor anxious he should succeed. King Foota-toro is one of my best sources of supply; and if the gurl could be found and took back, I know the old nigger would do the handsome to me on my next trip to the coast."

"Well, worthy captin, I don't know that there's any hope, and won't hold out any to hish royal highnesh the prince. I'm not as able to get about ash I ushed to was; but I'll try my besht for you. As you shay, I might do something towardsh putting him in the way. Well, we'll talk it over; but let ush first settle our other bishness, or all the world will be aboard. Twenty, you shay, are his?"

"Twenty of them 'ere Mandingoes."

"Hash he anything besides?"

"In cash? no, not a red cent. Men and women are the dollars of his country. He hez the four attendants, you see. They air his slaves like the others."

"Twenty-four, then, in all. Blesh my soul! What a lucky fellow ish this prinsh. Maybe I can do something for him; but we can talk it over in the cabin, and I'm ready for something to drink, worthy Showler."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, as, on turning round, he perceived the group of girls before mentioned. "Blesh my soul! Some likely wenches. Just the sort for chambermaids," added he, with a villanously significant look. "How many of that kind hash you got, good Showler?"

"About a dozen," jocularly responded the

skipper; "some splendid breeders among 'em, if you want any for that bizness."

"I may—I may. Gad! it's a valuable cargo—one thing with another! Well, let ush go below," added he, turning towards the companion. "What's in your locker? I musht have a drink before I can do bishness. Likely wenches! Gad—a valuable cargo!"

Smacking his lips, and snapping his fingers as he talked, the old reprobate descended the companion stairway—the captain of the slaver following close behind him.

We know not, except by implication, the details of the bargaining that took place below. The negotiation was a secret one—as became the nature of any transaction between two such characters as a slave-dealer and a slave-stealer.

It resulted, however, in the purchase of the whole cargo; and in so short a time, that just as the sun sank into the sea, the gig, cutter, and long-boat of the slaver were lowered into the water; and, under the darkness of night, the "bales" were transported to the shore, and landed in the little cove whence the skiff of the slave-merchant had put out.

Amongst them were the twenty Mandin-

goes, the attendants of the prince, and the "wenches," designed for improving the breed on Jessuron's plantation: for the slave-merchant was also a land-proprietor and planter.

The skiff was seen returning to the shore, a cable's-length in the wake of the other boats. Now, however, a fourth personage appeared in it, seated in the stern, face to face with the owner. The gaily-coloured costume, even in the darkness, shining over the calm shadowy surface of the sea, rendered it easy to recognize this individual as the Foolah prince. The wolf and the lamb were sailing in the same boat.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HANDSOME OFFER.

On the day after the slave ship had landed her cargo, and at an early hour in the morning, Mr. Vaughan, looking from the front window of his house, perceived a solitary horseman approaching by the long avenue.

As the stranger drew nearer, the animal he bestrode appeared gradually to transform itself into a mule; and the rider was seen to be an old gentleman in a blue coat, with metal buttons, and ample outside pockets—under which were breeches and top-boots, both sullied by long wear. A damaged brown beaver hat upon his head, with the edge of a white cotton skull-cap showing beneath it—green goggles upon the nose—and a large blue umbrella, instead of a whip, grasped in the right hand—enabled Mr. Vaughan to identify one of his nearest neighbours: the penn-keeper Jacob Jessuron, who, among other live stock, was also known as an extensive speculator in slaves.

"The old Jew!" muttered Mr. Vaughan, with an accent that betokened a certain degree of discontent. "What can *he* want at this early hour? Some slave stock for sale, I suppose? That looked like a trader I saw yesterday in the offing; and he's sure to have had a lot or two out of her. Well, he won't find a market here. Fortunately, I'm stocked. Morning, Mr. Jessuron!" continued he, hailing his visitor as the latter dismounted by the bottom of the stairway. "As usual, you are early abroad. Business, eh?"

"Ach, yesh, Mishter Vochan! Bishness must be minded. A poor man like me can't afford to shleep late theesh hard times!"

"Ha! ha! Poor man, indeed! That's a capital joke, Mr. Jessuron! Come in. Have you breakfasted?"

"Yesh, thanks, Mishter Vochan," replied the Jew, as he climbed up the steps. "I always breakfasht at six."

"Oh, that is early! A glass of swizzle, then?"

"Thanks, Mishter Vochan; you ish very kind. A glash of shwizzell will be better ash anything else. Itsh warm thish morning."

The *swizzle*, a mixture of rum, sugar, water,

and lime-juice, was found in a large punch-bowl that stood upon the sideboard, with a silver ladle resting across the rim, and glasses set around it. This is a standing drink in the dwelling of a Jamaica planter—a fountain that may be said never to go dry, or, at all events, renewed as soon as exhausted.

Stepping up to the sideboard, where he was attended to by a black butler, the penn-keeper briskly quaffed off a tumbler of the swizzle; and then smacking his lips, and adding the observation, "'Tish goot!" he returned towards the window, where a chair had been placed for him beside the one already occupied by his host.

The visitor removed his beaver hat, though the white skull-cap—not over clean—was still permitted to keep its place upon his head.

Mr. Vaughan was a man possessed of considerable courtesy, or at least, an affectation of it. He remained silent, therefore, politely waiting for his guest to initiate the conversation.

"Well, Mishter Vochan," began the Jew, "I hash come over to see you on a shmall bishness—a very shmall bishness it is, shcarcely worth troubling you about."

Here the speaker hesitated, as if to put some proposition into shape.

"Some black stock for sale, eh? I think I've heard that a cargo came in yesterday. You got part, I suppose?"

"Yesh, yesh, I bought a shmall lot, a very shmall lot. I hadn't the monish to buy more. S'help me gott! the shlaves ish getting so dear ash I can't afford to buy. This talk about shtoppin' the trade ish like to ruin ush all. Don't you think so, Mishter Vochan?"

"Oh, as for that, *you* needn't fear. If the British Government should pass the bill, the law will be only a dead letter. They could never guard the whole of the African coast —no, nor that of Jamaica neither. I think, Mr. Jessuron, you would still contrive to land a few bales, eh?"

"Ach, no, Mishter Vochan! dear, oh dear, no! I shouldn't venture againsht the laws. If the trade ish to be stop, I musht give up the bishness. Slaves would be too dear for a poor Jewsh man like me to deal in: s'help me, yesh! they're too dear ash it ish."

"Oh, that's all nonsense about their getting dearer! It's very well for you to talk so, Mr. Jessuron: you have some to sell, I presume?"

"Not now, Mishter Vochan, not now. Posshible, I may have a shmall lot to dishpose of in a day or two; but joosht now, I haven't a shingle head ready for the market. Thish morning I want to buy, instead of shell."

"To buy! From me, do you mean?"

"Yesh, Mishter Vochan, if you're disposed to shell."

"Come, that's something new, neighbour Jessuron! I know you're always ready for a trade; but this is the first time I ever heard of you buying slaves on a plantation."

"Well, the truth ish, Mishter Vochan, I hash a cushtomer, who wants a likely wench for waiting at hish table. Theresh none among my shtock, he thinks good enough for hish purposh. I wash thinking you hash got one, if you could shpare her, that would suit him nishely."

"Which do you mean?"

"I mean that young Foolah wench ash I sold you lasht year—joosh after crop time."

"Oh! the girl Yola?"

"Yesh, I think that wosh her name. Ash you had her dirt sheep, I don't mind giving you shomething on your bargain—shay ten pounds currenshy?"

"Poh, poh, poh!" replied the planter, with a deprecating shrug. "That would never do—even if I meant to sell the girl. But I have no wish to part with her."

"Shay twenty, then?"

"Nor twice twenty, neighbour. I wouldn't, under any circumstances, take less than two hundred pounds for that girl. She has turned out a most valuable servant——"

"Two hunder poundsh!" interrupted the Jew, starting up in his chair. "Och! Mishter Vochan, theresh not a black wench in the island worth half the monish. Two hunder poundsh! Blesh my soul, that ish a prishe! I wish I could shell some of my shtock at that prishe! I'd be glad to give any two I hash for two hunder poundsh."

"Why, Mr. Jessuron! I thought you said just now slaves were getting very dear?"

"Dear, yesh; but that is doublish dear. S'help me gott! You don't mean it, Mishter Vochan?"

"But I do mean it; and even if you were to offer me two hundred——"

"Don't shay more about it," said the slave-merchant, hurriedly interrupting the hypothetical speech; "don't shay more; I agreesh

to give it. Two hunder poundsh!—blesh my shtars! it'll make a bankrup' of me."

"No, it will not do that: since I cannot agree to take it."

"Not take two hunder poundsh?"

"No—nor twice that sum."

"Gott help ush, Mishter Vochan; you ish shurely shokin? Why will you not take two hunder? I hash the monish in my pocket."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, neighbour; but the fact is, I could not sell the girl Yola at any price, without the consent of my daughter—to whom I have given her."

"Mish Vochan?"

"Yes—she is her maid; and I know that my daughter is very fond of her. It is not likely she would consent to the girl's being sold."

"But, Mishter Vochan! you shurely don't let your daughter shtand between you and a good bargain? Two hunder poundsh is big monish—big monish, Cushtos. The wench ish not worth half ash much, and, for myshelf, I wouldn't give half; but I don't want to dishappoint a good cushtomer, who'sh not so particular ash to prishe."

"Your customer fancies the girl, eh?" said

Mr. Vaughan, glancing significantly at his guest. "She is very good-looking—no wonder. But, if that be the reason for his wanting to buy her, I may as well tell you, I should myself not be inclined to part with her; and, as for my daughter, if she suspected such a purpose, all the money you have got, Mr. Jessuron, wouldn't reach the price of Yola."

"S'help me gott, Mishter Vochan, you're mishtaken! The cushtomer I speak of never shet hish eyes on the wench. Itsh only a waiting-maid he wants for hish table; and I thought of her, ash she'sh joost what he deshcribes. How do you know that Mish Vochan might not conshent to let her go? I promish to get her another young girl ash goot or better ash Yola."

"Well," replied the planter, after a moment's reflection, and apparently tempted by the handsome offer, "since you seem so determined upon buying the wench, I'll consult my daughter about it. But I can hold out very little hope of success. I know that she likes this young Foolah. I have heard that the girl was some king's daughter in her own country; and I am as good as certain Kate won't consent to her being sold."

"Not if *you* wished it, Mishter Vochan?"

"Oh, if I insisted upon it, of course; but I gave my daughter a promise not to part with the girl against her wish, and I never break my word, Mr. Jessuron—not to my own child."

With this rather affected profession, the planter walked out of the room, leaving the slave-merchant to his reflections.

"May the diffel strike me dead if that man ishn't mad!" soliloquized the Jew, when left to himself; "shtark shtarin mad! refuse two hunder poundsh for a she wench ash brown ash a cocoa-nut! Blesh my shtars!"

"As I told you, Mr. Jessuron," said the planter, re-entering the hall, "my daughter is inexorable. Yola cannot be sold."

"Good morning, Mishter Vochan," said the slave-merchant, taking up his hat and umbrella, and making for the door. "Good morning, shir: I hash no other bishness to-day."

Then, putting on his hat and grasping his umbrella, with an air of spitefulness he was unable to conceal, he hurried down the stone steps, scrambled upon the back of his mule, and rode away in sullen silence.

"Unusually free with his money this morning," said the planter, looking after him. "Some shabby scheme, I have no doubt. Well, I suppose I have thwarted it; besides, I am glad of an opportunity of disobliging the old curmudgeon: many's the time he has done as much for me!".

CHAPTER IX.

JUDITH JESSURON.

In the most unamiable of tempers did the slave-speculator ride back down the avenue. So out of sorts was he at the result of his interview, that he did not think of unfolding his blue umbrella to protect himself from the hot rays of the sun, now striking vertically downward. On the contrary, he used the *parapluie* for a very different purpose—every now and then belabouring the ribs of his mule with it: as if to rid himself of his spleen by venting it on the innocent mongrel.

Nor did he go in silence, although he was alone. In a kind of involuntary soliloquy he kept muttering, as he rode on, long strings of phrases denunciatory of the host whose roof he had just quitted.

The daughter, too, of that host came in for a share of his muttered denunciations, which at times, assumed the form of a menace.

Part of what he said was spoken distinctly and with emphasis:—

"The dusht off my shoosh, Loftish Vochan —I flingsh it back to you! Gott for damsch! there wash a time when you would be glad for my two hunder poundsh. Not for any monish? Bosh! Grand lady, Mish Kate— Mish Quasheby! Ha! I knowsh a thing— I knowsh a leetle thing. Some day, may be, yourshelf sell for lesh ash two hunder poundsh. Ach! I not grudgsh twice the monish to see that day!

"The dusht off my shoosh to both of youshl" he repeated, as he cleared the gate entrance. "I'sh off your grounds, now; and, if I hash you here, I shay you something of my mind —something ash make you sell your wench for lesh ash two hunder poundsh! I do so, some time, pleash gott! Ach!"

Uttering this last exclamation with a prolonged aspirate, he raised himself erect in his stirrups; and, half turning his mule, shook his umbrella in a threatening manner towards Mount Welcome—his eye accompanying the action with a glance that expressed some secret but vindictive determination.

As he faced back into the road, another per-

sonage appeared upon the scene—a female equestrian, who, trotting briskly up, turned her horse, and rode along by his side.

She was a young girl, or, rather a young woman—a bright, beautiful creature—who appeared an angel by the side of that demon-like old man.

She had evidently been waiting for him at the turning of the road; and the air of easy familiarity, with the absence of any salutation as they met, told that they had not long been separated.

Who was this charming equestrian?

A stranger would have asked this question, while his eye rested upon the object of it with mingled feelings of wonder and admiration: admiration at such rare beauty—wonder at beholding it in such rude companionship!

It was a beauty that need not be painted in detail. The forehead of noble arch; the scimetar-shaped eyebrows of ebon blackness; the dark-brown flashing pupils; the piquant prominence of the nose, with its spiral curving nostrils; were all characteristics of Hebraic beauty—a shrine before which both Moslem and Christian have ofttimes bent the knee in humblest adoration.

Twenty cycles have rolled past—twenty centuries of outrage, calumny, and wrong—housed in low haunts—pillaged and persecuted—oft driven to desperation—rendered roofless and homeless—still, amid all, and in spite of all, lovely are Judah's dark-eyed daughters—fair as when they danced to the music of cymbal and timbrel, or, to the accompaniment of the golden-stringed harp, sang the lays of a happier time.

Here, in a new world, and canopied under an occidental sky, had sprung up a very type of Jewish beauty: for never was daughter of Judah lovelier than the daughter of Jacob Jessuron—she who was now riding by his side.

A singular contrast did they present as they rode together—this fair maid and that harsh-featured, ugly old man—unlike as the rose to its parent thorn.

Sad are we to say, that the contrast was only physical: morally, it was "like father like daughter." In external form, Judith Jessuron was an angel; in spirit—and we say it with regret—she was the child of her father—devilish as he.

"A failure?" said this fair she, taking the initiative. "Pah! I needn't have asked,

you: it's clear enough from your looks—though, certes, that beautiful countenance of yours is not a very legible index to your thoughts. What says Vanity Vaughan? Will he sell the girl?"

"No."

"As I expected."

"S'help me, he won't!"

"How much did you bid for her?"

"Och! I'sh ashamed to tell you, Shoodith."

"Come, old rabbi, you needn't be backward before me. How much?"

"Two hunder poundsh."

"Two hundred pounds! Well, that is a high figure! If what you've told me be true, his own daughter isn't worth so much. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Hush, Shoodith, dear! Don't shpeak of that—for your life don't shpeak of it. You may shpoil some plansh I hash about her."

"Have no fear, good father. I never spoiled any plan of yours yet—have I?"

"No, no! You hash been a good shild, my daughter!—a good shild, s'help me gott, you hash."

"But tell me; why would the Custos not sell? He likes money almost as well as your-

self. Two hundred pounds is a large price for this copper-coloured wench—quite double what she's worth."

"Ach, Shoodith dear, it wash not Vochan hishelf that refused it."

"Who then?"

"Thish very daughter you speaksh of."

"She!" exclaimed the young Jewess, with a curl of the lip, and a contemptuous twist of her beautiful nostril, that all at once changed her beauty into very ugliness. "She, you say? I wonder what next! The conceited *mustee*—herself no better than a slave!"

"Shtop—shtop, Shoodith," interrupted the Jew, with a look of uneasiness. "Keep that to yourshelf, my shild. Shay no more about it—at leasht, not now, not now. The trees may have earsh."

The burst of angry passion hindered the fair "Shoodith" from making rejoinder, and for some moments father and daughter rode on in silence.

The latter was the first to re-commence the conversation.

"You are foolish, good father," said she; "absurdly foolish."

"Why, Shoodith?"

"Why? In offering to buy this girl at all."

"Ay—what would you shay?" inquired the old Jew, as if the interrogatory had been an echo to his own thoughts. "What would you shay?"

"I would say that you are silly, old rabbi Jacob; and that's what I do say."

"Blesh my shoul! What dosh you mean, Shoodith?"

"Why, dear and worthy papa, you're not always so dull of comprehension. Answer me: what do you want the Foolah for?"

"Och! you know what I wants her for, Thish prinshe will give hish twenty Mandingoes for her. There ish no doubt but that she's his sister. Twenty good shtrong Mandingoes, worth twenty hunder poundsh. Blesh my soul! it'sh a fortune?

"Well; and if it is a fortune, what then?"

"If it ish? By our fathers! you talk of twenty hunder poundsh ash if monish was dirt."

"My worthy parent, you misunderstand me."

"Mishunderstand you, Shoodith?"

"You do. I have more respect for twenty

hundred pounds than you give me credit for. So much, as that I advise you to *get it.*"

"Get it! why, daughter, that ish shoosht what I am trying to do."

"Ay, and you've gone about it in such a foolish fashion, that you run a great risk of losing it."

"And how would you have me go about it, mine Shoodith?"

"By *taking it.*"

The slave-merchant suddenly jerked upon the bridle, and pulled his mule to a stand—as he did so darting towards his daughter a look half-puzzled, half-penetrating.

"Good father Jacob," continued she, halting at the same time, "you are not wont to be so dull-witted. While waiting for you at the gate of this pompous sugar-planter, I could not help reflecting; and my reflections led me to ask the question: what on earth had taken you to his house?"

"And what answer did you find, Shoodith?"

"Oh, not much; only that you went upon a very idle errand."

"Yesh, it hash been an idle errand: I did not get what I went for."

"And what matters if you didn't?"

"Mattersh it? Twenty Mandingoes mattersh a great deal—twenty hunder poundsh currenshy. That ish what it mattersh, Shoodith mine darling!'

"Not the paring of a Mandingo's toe-nail, my paternal friend."

"Hach! what shay you, mine wise Shoodith?"

"What say I? Simply, that these Mandingoes might as well have been yours without all this trouble. They may be yet—ay, and their master too, if you desire to have a prince for your slave. *I* do."

"Speak out, Shoodith; I don't understand you."

"You will presently. Didn't you say, just now, that Captain Jowler has reasons for not coming ashore?"

"Captain Showler! He would rather land in the Cannibal Islands than in Montego Bay. Well, Shoodith?"

"Rabbi Jessuron, you weary my patience. For the Foolah prince—as you say he is—you are answerable only to Captain Jowler. Captain Jowler comes not ashore."

"True—it ish true," assented the Jew, with a gesture that signified his comprehension of these preliminary premises.

"Who, then, is to hinder you from doing as you please in the matter of these Mandingoes?"

"Wonderful Shoodith!" exclaimed the father, throwing up his arms, and turning upon his daughter a look of enthusiastic admiration. "Wonderful Shoodith! Joosh the very thing!—blesh my soul!—and I never thought of it!"

"Well, father; luckily it's not too late. *I* have been thinking of it. I knew very well that Kate Vaughan would not part with the girl Yola. I told you she wouldn't; but, by the bye, I hope you've said nothing of what you wanted her for? If you have——"

"Not a word, Shoodith! not a word!"

"Then no one need be a word the wiser. As to Captain Jowler——"

"Showler daren't show hish face in the Bay: that'sh why he landed hish cargo on the coast. Besides, there wash an understanding between him and me. He doeshn't care what ish done

with the prinshe—not he. Anyhow, he'll be gone away in twenty-four hours."

"Then in twenty-four hours the Mandingoes may be yours—prince, attendants, and all. But time is precious, papa. We had better hasten home at once, and strip his royal highness of those fine feathers before some of our curious neighbours come in and see them. People will talk scandal, you know. As for our worthy overseer——"

"Ah, Ravener! he knowsh all about it. I wash obliged to tell him ash we landed."

"Of course you were; and it will cost you a Mandingo or two to keep *his* tongue tied: that it will. For the rest, there need be no difficulty. It won't matter what these savages may say for themselves. Fortunately, there's no scandal in a black man's tongue."

"Wonderful Shoodith!" again exclaimed the admiring parent. "My precious daughter, you are worth your weight in golden guinish! Twenty-four shlaves for nothing, and one of them a born prinshe! Two thousand currenshy! Blesh my soul! It ish a shplendid profit—worth a whole year's buyin' and shellin'."

And with this honest reflection, the slave-merchant hammered his mule into a trot, and followed his "preciqus Shoodith"—who had already given the whip to her horse, and was riding rapidly homeward.

CHAPTER X.

THE *SEA NYMPH*.

On the third day after the slaver had cast anchor in the Bay of Montego, a large square-rigged vessel made her appearance in the offing; and, heading shoreward, with all sail set, stood boldly in for the harbour. The Union Jack of England, spread to the breeze, floated freely above her taffrail; and various boxes, bales, trunks, and portmanteaus, that could be seen on her deck—brought up for debarkation—as well as the frank, manly countenances of the sailors who composed her crew, proclaimed the ship to be an honest trader. The lettering upon her stern told that she was the "*Sea Nymph*, of Liverpool."

Though freighted with a cargo of merchandise, and in reality a merchantman, the presence on board of several individuals in the costume of landsmen, denoted that the *Sea Nymph* also accommodated passengers.

The majority of these were West India

planters, with their families, returning from a visit to the mother country—their sons, perhaps, after graduating at an English university, and their daughters on having received their final *polish* at some fashionable metropolitan seminary.

Here and there an "attorney"—a constituent element of West Indian society, though not necessarily, as the title suggests, a real limb of the law. Of the latter there might have been one or two, with a like number of unpractised disciples of Æsculapius; both lawyer and doctor bent on seeking fortune—and with fair prospects of finding it in a land notorious for crime as unwholesome in clime. These, with a sprinkling of nondescripts, made up the list of the *Sea Nymph's* cabin passengers.

Among these nondescripts was one of peculiarities sufficiently distinctive to attract attention. A single glance at this personage satisfied you that you looked upon a London Cockney, at the same time a West-End exquisite of the very purest water. He was a young man who had just passed the twenty-first anniversary of his birth; although the indulgence of youthful dissipation had already brushed the freshness from his features, giving them the

stamp of greater age. In complexion he was fair—pre-eminently so—with hair of a light yellowish hue, that presented the appearance of having been artificially curled, and slightly darkened by the application of some perfumed oil. The whiskers and moustache were nearly of the same colour; both evidently cultivated with an elaborate assiduity, that proclaimed excessive conceit in them on the part of their owner.

The eyebrows were also of the lightest shade; but the hue of the eyes was not so easily told: since one of them was kept habitually closed; while a glancing lens, in a frame of tortoise-shell, hindered a fair view of the other. Through the glass, however, it appeared of a greenish grey, and decidedly "piggish."

The features of this individual were regular enough, though without any striking character; and of a cast rather effeminate than vulgar. Their prevailing expression was that of a certain superciliousness, at times extending to an affectation of sardonism.

The dress of the young man was in correspondence with the foppery exhibited in the perfumed locks and eye-glass. It consisted of a surtout of broadcloth, of a very light drab,

with a cape that scarce covered the shoulders; a white beaver hat; vest and pants of spotless buff kerseymere; kid gloves on his hands; and boots, bright as lacquer could make them, on his feet. These items of apparel, made in a style of fashion and worn with an air of *savoir faire*, loudly proclaimed the London fop of the time.

The affected drawl in which the gentleman spoke, whenever he condescended to hold communion with his fellow-passengers, confirmed this character.

Notwithstanding a certain ill-disguised contempt with which he was regarded by some of his fellow-voyagers, not a few treated him with marked deference; and the obeisance paid him by the steward and cabin boys of the *Sea Nymph* gave evidence of his capability to bestow a liberal largess. And such capability did he possess: for Mr. Montagu Smythje, the individual in question, was a youth of good family and fortune—the latter consisting of a magnificent sugar estate in Jamaica, left him by a deceased relative, to visit which was the object of his voyage.

The estate he had never seen, as this was his first trip across the Atlantic; but he had no reason to doubt the existence of the pro-

perty. The handsome income which it had afforded him, during several years of his minority, and which had enabled him to live in magnificent style in the most fashionable circles of London society, was a substantial proof that Montagu Castle—such was the name of the estate—was something more than a castle in the air. During his minority, the estate had been managed by a *trustee* resident in the island: one Mr. Vaughan, himself a sugar-planter, whose plantation adjoined that of Montagu Castle.

Mr. Smythje had not come over the water with any intention of settling upon his Jamaica estate. "Such an ideaw," to use his own phraseology, "nevwaw entawed ma bwain. To exchange London and its pwesyaws for a wesidence among those haw-ed niggaws—deaw, no! I could nevwaw think of such a voluntawy banishment; that would be a baw—a decided baw!" "A meaw twip to see something of the twopics, of which I've heard such extwaor'nary stowies—have a look at my sugaw plantation and the dem'd niggaws—besides, I have a stwong desire to take a squint at these Queeole queetyaws, who are said to be so doocèd pwetty. Haw! haw!"

After such fashion did Mr. Montagu Smythje explain the purpose of his voyage to such of his fellow-passengers as chanced to take an interest in it.

There were but few travellers in the steerage of the *Sea Nymph*. They who are compelled to adopt that irksome mode of voyaging across the Atlantic have but little errand to the West Indies, or elsewhere to tropical lands—where labour is monopolized by the thews and sinews of the slave. Only three or four of this class had found accommodation on board the *Sea Nymph;* and yet among these humble voyagers was one destined to play a conspicuous part in our story.

The individual in question was a young man, in appearance of the same age as Mr. Montagu Smythje, though differing from the latter in almost everything else. In stature he was what is termed "middle height," with limbs well set and rounded, denoting activity and strength. His complexion, though not what is termed *brunette*, was dark for a native of Britain, though such was he.

His features were nobly defined; and his whole countenance sufficiently striking to attract the attention of even an indifferent

observer. Dark brown eyes, and hair of like colour, curling jauntily over his cheeks, were characteristic points of gracefulness; and, take him all in all, he was what might justly be pronounced a handsome young fellow.

The garments he wore were his best—put on for the first time during the voyage, and for the grand occasion of *landing*. A dark blue tunic frock, faced with black braid, skirting down over a pair of close-fitting tights, and Hessian boots, gave him rather a *distingué* air, notwithstanding a little threadbarishness apparent along the seams.

The occupation in which the young man was engaged betrayed a certain degree of refinement. Standing near the windlass, in the blank leaf of a book, which appeared to be his journal, he was sketching the harbour into which the ship was about to enter; and the drawing exhibited no inconsiderable degree of artistic skill.

For all that, the sketcher was *not* a professional artist. Professionally, indeed, and to his misfortune, he was nothing. A poor scholar—without trick or trade by which he might earn a livelihood—he had come out to the West Indies, as young men go to

other colonies, with that sort of indefinite hope, that Fortune, in some way or other, might prove kinder abroad than she had been at home.

Whatever hopes of success the young colonist may have entertained, they were evidently neither sanguine nor continuous. Though naturally of a cheerful spirit, as his countenance indicated, a close observer might have detected a shadow stealing over it at intervals.

As the ship drew near to the shore, he closed the book, and stood scanning the gorgeous picture of tropical scenery, now, for the first time, disclosed to his eyes.

Despite the pleasant emotions which so fair a scene was calculated to call forth, his countenance betrayed anxiety—perhaps a doubt as to whether a welcome awaited him in that lovely land upon which he was looking.

Only a few moments had he been thus occupied, when a strange voice falling upon his ear caused him to turn towards the speaker—in whom he recognized the distinguished cabin passenger, Mr. Montagu Smythje.

As this gentleman had voyaged all the way from Liverpool to Jamaica without once venturing to set his foot across the line which separates

the sacred precincts of the quarter from the more plebeian for'ard deck, his presence by the windlass might have been matter of surprise.

A circumstance, however, explained it. It was the last hour of the voyage. The *Sea Nymph* was just heading into the harbour; and the passengers of all degrees had rushed forward, in order to obtain a better view of the glorious landscape unfolding itself before their eyes. Notwithstanding his often-expressed antipathy to the "abom'nable smell of taw" it was but natural that Mr. Smythje should yield to the general curiosity, and go forward among the rest.

Having gained an elevated stand-point upon the top of the windlass, he had adjusted the glass to his eye, and commenced *ogling* the landscape, now near enough for its details to be distinguished.

Not for long, however, did Mr. Smythje remain silent. He was not one of a saturnine habit. The fair scene was inspiring him with a poetical fervour, which soon found expression in characteristic speech.

"Doocèd pwetty, 'pon honaw!" he exclaimed; "would make a spwendid dwop-scene

faw a theataw ! Dawnt yaw think so, ma good fwend ? "

The person thus appealed to chanced to be the young steerage passenger ; who, during the long voyage, had abstained from going *abaft* of the main-mast with as much scrupulousness as Mr. Smythje had observed about venturing forward. Hence it was that the voice of the exquisite was as strange to him, as if he had never set eyes on that illustrious personage.

On perceiving that the speech was meant for himself, he was at first a little nettled at its patronizing tone ; but the feeling of irritation soon passed away, and he fixed his eyes upon the speaker, with a good-humoured, though somewhat contemptuous expression.

" Aw—haw—it is yaw, my young fellaw," continued the exquisite, now for the first time perceiving to whom he had made his appeal. " Aw, indeed ! I've often observed yaw from the quawter-deck. Ba Jawve ! yes—a veway stwange individwal !—incompwehensibly stwange ! May I ask—pawdon the liberty —what is bwinging yaw out heaw—to Jamaica, I mean ?"

" That," replied the steerage passenger, again somewhat nettled at the rather free

91472

style of interrogation, "which is bringing yourself—the good ship *Sea Nymph.*"

"Aw, haw! indeed! Good—veway good! But, my deaw sir, that is not what I meant."

"No?"

"No, I ashaw yaw. I meant what bisness bwings yaw heaw. P'waps you have some pwofession?"

"No, not any," replied the young man, checking his inclination to retaliate the impertinent style of his interrogator.

"A twade, then?"

"I am sorry to say I have not even a trade."

"No pwofession! no twade! what the dooce daw yaw intend dawing in Jamaica? P'waps yaw expect the situation of book-keepaw on a pwantation, or niggaw-dwivaw. Neithaw, I believe, requiaws much expewience, as I am told the book-keepaw has pwositively no books to keep—haw! haw! and shawly any fellaw, howevaw ignowant, may dwive a niggaw. Is that yaw expectation, my worthy fwend?"

"I have no expectation, one way or another," replied the young man, in a

tone of careless indifference. "As to the business I may follow out here in Jamaica, that, I suppose, will depend on the will of another."

"Anothaw! aw!—who, pway?"

"My uncle."

"Aw, indeed! yaw have an uncle in Jamaica, then?"

"I have—if he be still alive."

"Aw—haw! yaw are not shaw of that intewesting fact? P'waps yaw've not heard from him wately?"

"Not for years," replied the young steerage passenger, his poor prospects now having caused him to relinquish the satirical tone which he had assumed. "Not for years," repeated he, "though I've written to him to say that I should come by this ship."

"Veway stwange! And pway, may I ask what bisness yaw uncle follows?"

"He is a planter, I believe."

"A sugaw plantaw?"

"Yes—he was so when we last heard from him."

"Aw, then, p'waps he is wich—a pwopwietor? In that case he may find something faw yaw to daw, bettaw than niggaw-dwiv-

ing. Make yaw his ovaw-seeaw. May I know yaw name?"

"Quite welcome to it. Vaughan is my name."

"Vawn!" repeated the exquisite, in a tone that betrayed some newly-awakened interest; "Vawn, did I understand yaw to say?"

"Herbert Vaughan," replied the young man, with firmer emphasis.

"And yaw uncle's name?"

"He is also called Vaughan. He is my father's brother—or rather *was*—my father is dead."

"Not Woftus Vawn, Esq., of Mount Welcome?"

"Yes, Loftus Vaughan; my uncle is so called, and Mount Welcome is, I believe, the name of his estate."

"Veway stwange! incompwehensibly stwange! D'yaw know, my young fellaw, that yaw and I appeaw to be making faw the same pawt. Woftus Vawn, of Mount Welcome, is the twustwee of my own pwoperty—the veway person to whom I am consigned. Deaw me! how doocèd stwange if yaw and I should yet be guests undaw the same woof!"

The remark was accompanied by a supercilious glance, that did not escape the observation of the young steerage passenger. It was this glance that gave the true signification to the words, which Herbert Vaughan interpreted as an insult.

He was on the point of making an angry rejoinder, when the exquisite turned abruptly away—as he parted-drawling out some words of leave-taking, with the presumptive conjecture that they might meet again.

Herbert Vaughan stood for a moment looking after him, an expression of high contempt curling upon his lip. Only for a short while, however, did this show itself; and then, his countenance resuming its habitual expression of good-nature, he descended into the steerage, to prepare his somewhat scanty baggage for the debarkation.

CHAPTER XI.

LOFTUS VAUGHAN ON THE LOOK-OUT.

EVERY day, after that on which he had received the two English letters—and almost every hour during daylight—might Loftus Vaughan have been seen, telescope in hand, at one of the front windows of his house, sweeping with his glass the roadstead and offing of Montego Bay.

The object of this telescopic observation was, that he might descry the *Sea Nymph* before she had entered the harbour: in order that his carriage should be at the port to receive the distinguished Smythje on the moment of his landing.

At this period there were no steamers trading across the Atlantic, punctual to a day, and almost to an hour. Though the letter of advice had been written several days before that on which the *Sea Nymph* was to sail, there could be no calculation made upon such

uncertain data as winds and waves; and the ship which carried Montagu Smythje might arrive at any hour.

That some distinguished guest was expected, was a fact that had become well known to every domestic in the establishment of Mount Welcome. Every day saw some article or articles of costly furniture brought home from the "Bay"; and the chambers of the "great house" were being freshly decorated to receive them. The house-wenches and other indoor servants were furnished with new dresses, some even with liveries—an unusual piece of finery in Jamaica—while shoes and stockings were forced upon feet that, perhaps, had never felt such *impedimenta* before, and whose owners would have been only too glad to have escaped the torture of wearing them.

It need scarcely be said that the planter was undergoing all this extravagant expenditure for the reception of Mr. Montagu Smythje, and him alone. Had it been only his nephew that was expected, no such continuous look-out would have been kept, and no such preparations made to do him honour on his arrival.

Neither do Mr. Vaughan's motives require

explanation: the reader will ere this have surmised them. He was the father of a daughter ready at any moment for marriage. Mr. Montagu Smythje was, in his eyes, not only an eligible, but highly desirable, specimen for a son-in-law. The young man was possessed of a splendid property, as Mr. Vaughan well knew: for the worthy planter was not only Custos Rotulorum, but for many long years had been custos of Montagu Castle, and could tell its value to a shilling "currency." It lay contiguous to his own. He had looked with a longing eye upon its broad acres and black retainers, until he had become imbued with a desire, amounting indeed to a passion, to possess it—if not in his own right, at least in that of his daughter. The union of the two estates, Mount Welcome and Montagu Castle, would make a magnificent domain—one of the richest in the Island.

To accomplish this object had long been the wish of Loftus Vaughan. It had grown and grown upon him, till it had become the most cherished purpose of his heart.

Let us not conceal a really creditable motive that Mr. Vaughan had for desiring this union. He had been too long in Jamaica to be igno-

rant of the true social position of his daughter. However beautiful and accomplished Kate Vaughan was; however much her father loved her—and, to do him justice, his paternal affection was of the strongest—he knew that her mother was a *quadroon*, and she only a *mustee*. No matter how little trace there might be of the *taint*—however imperceptible to the outward eye—he knew that between her and the young gentlemen of his acquaintance—that is, those who would have been eligible—there was still enough to erect a certain social barrier. He knew, moreover, that young Englishmen, especially on their first arrival, make light of this barrier; in fact, altogether disregard it, until corrupted by the "society" of the island.

In his match-making designs the Jamaica planter was not more of a sinner than hundreds of other parents both at home and abroad; and there is this much in his favour: that, perhaps, his affection for his daughter, and the desire of ennobling her—for by such an alliance would the *taint be extinguished*—were the chief motives for the conduct he was pursuing in regard to Montagu Smythje.

So far Mr. Vaughan's conduct may be ex-

cused. But, unfortunately, the studied courtesy with which he was preparing to receive the lord of Montagu Castle presented a damaging contrast to the discourtesy he had designed for his kinsman.

In the latter case, both his acts and intentions were paltry beyond parallel.

The announcement in the nephew's letter, that he had taken a *steerage passage*, had been to his uncle a source of bitter chagrin. Not that he would have cared a whit about the thing, had the young fellow voyaged in any other vessel than the *Sea Nymph*, or had he travelled unrecognized. What troubled Mr. Vaughan was the fear that the relationship might become known to Mr. Montagu Smythje, and thus create in the mind of the latter a suspicion of his, the planter's, respectabilty.

The dread of this *exposé* so preyed upon Mr. Vaughan's mind that, had it been possible, he would have denied the relationship altogether.

He had conceived a hope that this recognition might not take place during the voyage: building his hope on the character of the aristocratic Cockney, which he knew to be a type of supercilious pride. Confiding in the

faith that nothing might transpire on board ship to make Mr. Smythje acquainted with the connection, he was determined there should be no chance on shore. To preclude the possibility of such a thing, he had conceived a design as childish as it was cruel: his nephew was to be *kept out of the way.*

The plan of action he had traced out long before the arrival of the *Sea Nymph.* Mr. Montagu Smythje was to be met at the landing, and at once hurried off to Mount Welcome. Herbert Vaughan was likewise to be conducted thither; but not direct.

A different means of transport was to be provided for him; and on his arrival within the bounds of the plantation, he was to be taken by a private road to the house of the overseer—which stood in a secluded corner of the valley, nearly half a mile distant from the "Buff."

Here he was to remain as the guest of the latter, until such time as his uncle could find a way of disposing of him—either by procuring some employment for him at Montego Bay, or the situation of book-keeper on some distant plantation.

With this ingenious contrivance did Mr. Vaughan await the arrival of his guests.

* * * * *

It was upon the third day after receiving his letters of advice, and near the hour of noon, that the planter, playing as usual with his telescope, perceived in the offing of Montego Bay, and standing in for the port, a large square-rigged vessel—a ship.

It might be the *Sea Nymph*, and it might not; but, taking into consideration some circumstances, known to Mr. Vaughan, the probabilities were that it was the expected vessel.

Whether or no, the planter was determined that the programme, he had so ingeniously sketched out, should not be spoiled by any mismanagement in the performance; and its execution was ordered upon the instant.

Bells were rung for a general muster of the domestics; a horn was sounded to summon the overseer; and, in less than half an hour afterwards, the family barouche—a handsome equipage, drawn by a pair of splendidly-caparisoned horses—was on the road to the Bay, with the overseer on horseback, riding as an escort behind it.

In rear of this went a waggon, to which eight large oxen were attached; and behind the waggon appeared an escort *sui generis*: a rough negro boy, mounted on the shaggiest of steeds, who was no other than the post-boy already mentioned—the identical Quashie.

Quashie was not on his usual diurnal duty: his present errand was one of a far more important character, and the duty confided to him of an exceedingly delicate nature.

At this hour the great hall of Mount Welcome exhibited a scene that, to the eye of a stranger to West Indian customs, might have appeared curious enough.

Scattered over the floor, at certain distances from each other, were some six or eight negro girls, or "wenches," as they are called, most of them being of the younger brood of the plantation blacks. All were down on their knees—each one having by her side, and within reach of her hand, an orange freshly cut in halves, some bees'-wax, and a portion of the fibrous pericarp of a cocoa-nut.

The floor itself was without carpet of any kind; but instead of being of plain deal, it presented a mosaic of hard woods, of different colours—among which might be recognized

the mahogany and heart-wood, the bread-nut and bully-tree.

To give the tesselated surface a polish was the business of the dark damsels on their knees; and for that purpose were the oranges and cocoa-husks provided.

To an islander the sight was one of common, indeed daily, occurrence. The lustre of his hall floor is a matter of pride with a Jamaica planter; as much so as the quality or pattern of his drawing-room carpet to a householder at home; and every day, and at the same hour, the dark-skinned housemaids make their appearance, and renew the glitter of the surface, whose gloss has been tarnished by the revels of the preceding night.

The hour set apart for this quaint custom is just before laying the cloth for dinner—about three or four o'clock; and that she may not sully the polish while carrying in the dishes, the barefooted Abigail adopts a plan that deserves mention on account of its originality.

Having provided herself with two small pieces of linen or cotton cloth, she spreads them out upon the floor, and then places a foot upon each. As the toes of a West Indian house-

wench are almost as prehensile as her fingers, she finds no difficulty in "cramping" the cloth and holding it between the "big toe" and its nearest neighbour; and with this simple *chaussure* she is enabled to slide over the floor without in the least degree "smoutching" its gloss, or leaving any sign of her passage over its shining surface.

While such a busy scene was transpiring in the great hall of Mount Welcome, one of a different character, but of equal activity, was going on in the kitchen. This "office" stood a little apart from the main dwelling, communicating with its lower storey by a covered gallery. Along this passage black and yellow wenches could be seen constantly going and returning, each with her load—a haunch of venison, a ham of the wild hog, a turtle, ramier pigeons, and mountain crabs, all on their way to the spit, the stew-pan, or the chafing-dish.

A similar sight might have been witnessed at Mount Welcome any other day in the year; but perhaps with a less abundant variety in the materials, and with not half so much movement among the staff of wenches pertaining to the *cuisine*—whose excited manner in the performance of their specific duties testified, as

much as the variety of luxuries lying around, that on this particular day a repast of the most sumptuous kind was expected from their skill.

Their master did not leave these preparations to be made without his own personal surveillance. From the time that the ship had been descried, he was everywhere—in the stable, to look after the sable grooms; in the kitchen, to instruct the cooks; in the great hall, to inspect the polishing of the floor; and, at last, on the landing outside, standing, telescope to his eye, and looking down the long avenue, where the carriage containing his distinguished visitor might at any moment be expected to make its appearance.

CHAPTER XII.

KATE AND YOLA.

Occupying one corner of the mansion of Mount Welcome—that which was farthest removed from the din and clangour of the kitchen—was a small chamber, richly and elegantly furnished. The light was admitted into it on two sides through latticed windows, that, when open, left a free passage from the floor to a little balcony outside—with which each of the windows was provided.

One of these windows looked out to the rearward, commanding a view of the garden, and the wooded steep beyond. The other opened to the left side of the house, upon the shrubbery grounds that extended in that direction as far as the foot of the ridge.

Even had there been no one within this little chamber, the style and character of its furniture would have told, that the person to whom it appertained was of the gentler sex.

In one corner stood a bed, with carved posts

of yellow lancewood; from which hung what at first sight might have been taken for white muslin curtains, but which, on closer scrutiny, could be seen to be the gauze-like netting of a "mosquito bar."

The size of the bed told that it was intended for but one individual. Its habitual occupant was therefore unmarried.

In the bay of one of the windows stood a dressing-table of *papier maché*, inlaid with mother-of-pearl; and upon this was placed a mirror of circular shape on a stand of the finest Spanish mahogany.

In front of the mirror was a variety of objects of different forms—among which might be noticed the usual implements of the toilet, with many of those eccentric little articles of *luxe* and *vertu*, that bespeak the refined presence of woman.

Other pieces of furniture in the room were three or four Chinese chairs; a small marqueterie table; a work-box of tortoise-shell veneer, on a pedestal of like material; and a little cabinet of ebony wood, richly inlaid with buhl.

There was neither mantel nor fireplace—the climate of eternal summer precluding all necessity for such "fixtures."

The window-curtains were of a thin transparent muslin, with a pattern of pink flowering woven into the stuff, and bordered with a fringe of alternate pink and white tassels.

A breeze, laden with the perfume of a thousand flowers, blowing in through the open latticework of the jalousies, kept these light hangings almost continually in motion, imparting an aspect of coolness to the chamber. This was further heightened by the glossy smoothness of the hard-wood floor, which glistened under foot like a mirror.

No one could have glanced into this little apartment, without being struck with its costly yet chaste adornment. Rich and elegant, however, as was the case, it was no more than worthy of the jewel which it was accustomed to contain. It was the bedroom and boudoir of "Lilly Quasheba," the heiress *presumptive* of Mount Welcome.

But few were ever favoured with a glance into that luxurious chamber. It was a sacred precinct, into which curious eyes were not permitted to penetrate. Its polished floor was not to be trodden by vulgar feet. With the exception of her father, no man had ever intruded into that virgin shrine; and he, only on

rare and extraordinary occasions. Even to the domestics it was not of free access. Only one, besides its mistress, could enter it unbidden—her brown-skinned handmaid Yola.

* * * *

On that same day—shortly after the ringing of the bells had announced the arrival of the English ship, and while the dusky domestics were engaged, as described, in their ante-prandial preparations—two individuals occupied the chamber in question.

One was the young lady to whom the apartment pertained—the other her maid.

They were in different attitudes: the mistress seated upon one of the Chinese chairs in front of the window, while the maid was standing behind, occupied in arranging her mistress's hair.

The girl was just entering upon her task—if we may so designate that which many might have deemed a pleasure. Already the complicated machinery of combs and hair-pins lay strewed over the table; and the long chestnut-coloured tresses hung in luxuriant confusion around those shoulders of snow, in whose velvet-like epidermis there appeared no trace of the *taint*.

Involuntarily the maid ceased from her task, and stood gazing upon her young mistress with a look of instinctive admiration.

"Oh, beautiful!" exclaimed she, in a low, murmured voice; "you beautiful, missa!"

"Tut, Yola: 'tis only flattery of you to say so! You are as beautiful as I; only your beauty is of a different order. No doubt, in your country you would be a great belle."

"Ah, missa, you belle anywhere—black man—white man—all think you beautiful—all the same!"

"Thank you, Yola! but I shouldn't particularly desire to be the object of such universal admiration. For my part, I don't know one male biped in whose eyes I care to appear attractive."

"Perhaps missa no so say, when come young buckra from Inglis' country!"

"Which buckra?—there are two of them expected from the English country."

"Yola no hear two come. Massa she hear speak of one—only one."

"Oh, you've heard speak of one only! Did you hear his name mentioned?"

"Yes; he grand man—great lord—Sultan

of Mongew. He have other name—Yola hear it; but she no sabbey speak it."

"Ha! ha! ha! I don't wonder at that. It's as much as I 'sabbey' myself to pronounce that second name: which I presume to be *Smythje*. Is that the name you heard?"

"That it, missa—he berry fine gentl'man, he beauty man. Massa he so tell Massr' Trusty."

"Ah, Yola! your master is a man, and men are not always the best judges of one another's looks. Perhaps the Sultan of Mongew, as you call him, might not be such a pattern of perfection as papa describes him. But no doubt, we shall soon have an opportunity of judging for ourselves. Did you hear your master say nothing about another "buckra" that is expected?"

"No, Missa Kate. One only he speak of—dis same one of Mongew Castle."

A low ejaculation, expressive of disappointment, escaped the lips of the young creole, as she settled down into an attitude of silent reflection, her eyes turned upon the shining floor at her feet.

It is not easy to tell why she put the last interrogatory. Perhaps she had some sus-

picion of her father's plans. At all events, she knew there was some mystery, and was desirous of penetrating it.

The maid was still gazing upon her, when all at once the dark Arab-like features of the latter assumed a changed expression—the look of admiration giving place to one of earnest inquiry, as if some strange thought had occurred to her.

"Allah!" ejaculated she, still keeping her eyes fixed upon the face of her mistress.

"Well, Yola," said the latter, attracted by the exclamation, and looking up; "why do you call upon Allah? Has anything occurred to you?"

"Oh! beauty missa! you so like one man."

"I like a man! I resemble a man! Is that what you mean?"

"Yes, missa. Nebber see it before—you berry, berry like!"

"Well, Yola, you are certainly not flattering me now. Who might this man be? I pray you tell me."

"He man of the mountains—Maroon."

"Oh! worse and worse! I resemble a *Maroon?* Gracious me! Surely you are jesting, Yola?"

"Oh! missa, he beauty man; roun' black eyes that glance like the fire-fly in the wood —eyes like yours—berry like you eyes, missa."

"Come, silly girl!" said the young lady, speaking in a tone of reproval, more affected than real; "do you know that it is very naughty of you, to compare me to a man—much more to a Maroon?"

"Oh! Missa Kate, he beauty man—berry beauty man."

"That I doubt very much; but even were it so, you should not speak of his resembling *me*."

"Me pardon, missa. I no more so say."

"No, you had better not, good Yola. If you do, I shall ask papa to *sell* you."

This was said in a tone of gentle raillery, which told that any intention of carrying out the threat was far from the speaker's thoughts.

"By the bye, Yola," continued the young lady, "I could get a good price for you. How much do you suppose I was offered for you the other day?"

"Missa Kate, I no know. Allah forbid me you ebber leave! If you no more my missa, I care no more live."

"Thanks, Yola," said the young creole,

evidently touched by the words of her attendant, the sincerity of which was proved by the tone in which they were spoken. "Be not afraid of my parting with you. As proof that I shall not, I refused a very large sum—how much, can you guess?"

"Ah! missa, I worth nothing to no one but you. If I you forced leave, I be no more happy in this world."

"Well, there is one who thinks you worth two hundred pounds, and has offered that for you."

"Who, missa?"

"Why—he who sold you to papa—Mr. Jessuron."

"Allah help poor Yola! Oh! missa Kate, he bad master; he berry wicked man. Yola die—Cubina kill her! Yola herself kill rather than she go back to Jew slave-dealer! Good missa!—beauty missa!—you no sell you poor slave?"

The girl fell upon her knees at the feet of her young mistress, with her hands clasped over her head, and for some moments remained in this attitude.

"Don't fear my selling you," said the young lady, motioning the suppliant to rise to her

feet; "least of all to him—whom I believe to be what you have styled him, a very wicked man. Have no fear for that. But tell me, what name was that you pronounced just now? *Cubina*, was it not?"

"Yes, missa, Cubina."

"And pray who is Cubina?"

The brown maid hesitated before making reply, while the crimson began to show itself on her chestnut-coloured cheeks.

"Oh, never mind!" said her young mistress, noticing her hesitation. "If there's any secret, Yola, I shall not insist upon an answer."

"Missa, from you Yola no have secret. Cubina, he mountain man—Maroon."

"What! is he the Maroon I am supposed to resemble?"

"True, missa, he same."

"Oh! I see how it is—I suppose that accounts for you thinking *me* beautiful? This Cubina, no doubt, is a sweetheart of yours?"

Yola lowered her eyes without making reply. The crimson appeared in deeper tint through the chestnut.

"You need not answer, good Yola," said the young creole, with a significant smile. "I

know what your answer *ought* to be, if you were to speak your mind. I think I have heard of this Cubina. Have a care, my girl! These Maroons are a very different sort of men from the coloured people on the plantations. Like me, he is—ha! ha! ha!" and the young beauty glanced coyly at the mirror. "Well, Yola, I'm not angry with you, since it is your sweetheart with whom I am compared. Love, they say, is a wonderful beautifier; and no doubt Master Cubina is, in your eyes, a perfect Endymion.

"Come girl!" added she, coquettishly tossing the chestnut tresses over her shoulders of ivory, "I fear we have been wasting time. If I'm not ready to receive this grand guest, I'll get into trouble with papa. Go on, and trick me out in a style becoming the mistress of Mount Welcome."

With a peal of merry laughter at the air of grandeur she had thus jestingly assumed, the young lady bent down her head, submitting her magnificent *chevelure* to the manipulation of her maid.

CHAPTER XIII

QUASHIE.

In less than half an hour after the brief conversation between Mr. Montagu Smythje and the young steerage passenger, the *Sea Nymph* had got warped into port, and was lying alongside the wharf.

A gangway-plank was stretched from the shore; and over this, men and women, of all shades of colour, from blonde to ebony black, and of as many different callings, came crowding aboard; while the passengers, sick of the ship and everything belonging to her, hastened to get on shore.

Half-naked porters—black, brown, and yellow—commenced wrangling over the luggage—dragging trunks, boxes, and bags in every direction but the right one, and clamouring their gumbo jargon with a volubility that resembled the jabbering of apes.

On the wharf appeared a number of wheeled vehicles, that had evidently been awaiting the arrival of the ship—not hackneys; as would have been the case in a European port, but private carriages—some of them handsome "curricles" drawn by a pair, and driven by black Jehus in livery; others only gigs with a single horse, or two-wheelers of even an inferior description—according to the wealth or style of the individual for whose transport each had been brought to the port.

Waggons, too, with teams of oxen—some having eight in the yoke—stood near the landing-place, waiting for baggage; the naked black drivers lounging silently by the animals, or occasionally calling them by their names, and talking to them, just as if their speeches had been understood!

Among the different carriages ranged along the wharf, a handsome barouche appeared conspicuous. It was attached to a pair of cream-coloured horses, splendidly caparisoned. A mulatto coachman sat upon the box, shining in a livery of lightest green, with yellow facings; while a footman, in garments of like

hue, attended at the carriage-step, holding the door for some one to get in.

Herbert Vaughan, standing on the fore-deck of the *Sea Nymph*—as yet undecided as to whether he should then go ashore—had noticed this magnificent equipage. He was still gazing upon it, when his attention was attracted to two gentlemen, who, having walked direct from the vessel, had just arrived by the side of the carriage. A white servant followed them; and behind were two negro attendants, carrying a number of parcels of light luggage. One of the gentlemen and the white servant were easily recognized by Herbert: they were Mr. Montagu Smythje and his valet.

Herbert now recalled the odd expression made use of, but the moment before, by his fellow-passenger—that he was "consigned" to the proprietor of Mount Welcome.

The carriage having received Mr. Montagu Smythje, and the footman having mounted the box—leaving the rumble to the English valet—was driven off at full speed; the second gentleman, who appeared to be an overseer, following on horseback as an escort.

Herbert watched the receding vehicle, until a turn in the road hid it from his view; and then, dropping his eyes towards the deck, he stood for some moments in a reflective attitude,—revolving in his mind some thoughts that were far from agreeable.

No one there to meet *him* and bid him welcome!

The countenance of the young adventurer became clouded under the influence of this thought; and he stood silently gazing upon the deck with eyes that saw not.

"Sa!" said a negro boy, at this moment stepping up and interrupting his reflections.

"Ha!" rejoined Herbert, looking up and perceiving, with some surprise, that the darkey was regarding him with a fixed stare. "What might you want, my lad? If it be money, I have none to give you."

"Money, sa? wharra fo' Quashie want money? He do wha' massr bid. Young buckra ready go now?"

"Ready to go! where?—what mean you, boy?"

"Go fo' da great house."

"Great house! of what great house are you speaking?"

"Moun' Welc'm', sa—Massr Va'n. You fo' Massr Va'n, sa?"

"What!" exclaimed Herbert, in surprise, at the same time scanning the darkey from head to foot; "how do you know that, my boy?"

"Quashie know dat well 'nuf. Cappen ob da big ship, obaseeah say so. Obaseeah point out young buckra from de waff—he send Quashie fetch young buckra to Moun' Welc'm'. Ready go now, sa?"

"You are from Mount Welcome, then?"

"Ya, sa—me hoss-boy da, an' pose-boy—fetch pony for young Englis' buckra. Obaseeah he bring b'rouche for grand Englis' buckra. Baggage dey go in de ox-waggon."

"Where is your pony?"

"Up yonna, sa; on de waff, sa. Ready go, sa?"

"All right," said Herbert, now comprehending the situation of affairs. "Shoulder that portmanteau, and toss it into the waggon. Which road am I to take?"

"Can't miss um road, sa—straight up da ribber till you come to de crossin.' Dar you take de road dat don't lead to da leff—you soon see Moun' Welc'm,' sa."

"How far is it?"

"Bout sebben or eight mile, sa—reach dar long 'fore sun-down; pony go like de berry lightnin'. Sure you no keep to da left by da crossin'."

Thus instructed, the young steerage-passenger took his departure from the ship—after bidding adieu to the friendly tars, who had treated him so handsomely during his irksome voyage.

With his gun, a single-barrelled fowling-piece, on his shoulder, he strode over the platform, and up the wooden wharf. Then detaching the pony from the wheel of the ox-waggon, to which it had been tied, he threw himself into the saddle, and trotted off along the road pointed out as the one that would conduct him to Mount Welcome.

The excitement produced by the sudden change from ship to shore—the stir of the streets through which he had to pass—the novel sights and sounds that at every step saluted his eyes and ears—hindered Herbert Vaughan from thinking of anything that concerned himself.

Only for a short time, however, was his mind thus distracted from dwelling on his own affairs. Before he had ridden far, the road—

hitherto bordered by houses—entered under a dark canopy of forest foliage; and the young traveller, all at once, found himself surrounded by a perfect solitude.

Under the sombre shadow of the trees, his spirit soon returned to its former gloomy forebodings; and, riding more slowly over a stretch of the road where the ground was wet and boggy, he fell into a train of thoughts that were anything but pleasant.

The subject of his reflections may be easily guessed. He had not failed to notice—how could he?—the distinction made between himself and his fellow-voyager. While a splendid equipage had been waiting for the latter—and his landing had been made a sort of ovation, how different was the means of transport provided for him!

"By the memory of my father!" muttered he, as he rode on, "it is an insult I shall not overlook: an insult to him more than to myself. But for the fulfilment of *his* dying wish, I should not go one step farther;" and as he said this, he drew his rough roadster to a halt—as if half-resolved to put his hypothetic threat into practice.

"Perhaps," he continued, again moving for-

ward, with a more hopeful air, "perhaps there may be some mistake? But no," he added, with a strong emphasis on the negative monosyllable, "there can be none! This shallow fop is a young man of fortune—I a child of misfortune;" and he smiled bitterly at the antithesis he had drawn; "that is the reason why such a distinction has been made between us. Be it so!" he continued, after a pause. "Poor as I am, this churlish relative will find me as proud as himself. I shall return him scorn for scorn. I shall demand an explanation of his behaviour; and the sooner I have it the better!"

As if stimulated by a sense of the outrage, as also by a half-formed purpose of retaliation, the young adventurer gave the whip to his shaggy steed, and dashed onward at full gallop.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRAVELLING AT THE TAIL.

For nearly an hour did the cob continue its gallop, without pause or slacking. The road was a wide one, much tracked by wheels; and, as it ran in a direct course, the rider took it for granted he was keeping the right path. Now and then he caught a glimpse of water through the trees—no doubt, the river mentioned in the directions given him by the darkey.

The crossing at length came in sight, causing him to desist from his rapid pace—in order that he might ford the stream. There was no appearance of a bridge. The water, however, was only knee-deep; and, without hesitation, the pony plunged in and waded over.

Herbert halted on the opposite bank: for there appeared in front of him a dilemma. The road forked. The negro boy had warned

him of this—telling him at the same time to take the one that *didn't* lead to "da leff"; but instead of two "tines" to the fork, there were *three!*

Here was a puzzle. It was easy enough to know which of the three *not* to take—the one that *did* lead to "da leff"; but which of the other two was to be chosen was the point that appeared to present a difficulty in the solution. Both were plain, good roads; and each as likely as the other to be the one which would conduct him to Mount Welcome.

Had his rider left the pony to its own guidance, perhaps it would have chosen the right road. In all likelihood he would have done so in the end; but, before determining on any particular line of action, he thought it better to look for the wheel-tracks of the carriage, that he knew must have passed in advance of him.

While thus cogitating, the silence occasioned by his momentary halt was all at once interrupted by a voice that sounded at his very side, and the tones of which he fancied were not new to him.

On suddenly turning in the saddle, and looking in the direction whence the voice appeared

to proceed, what was his astonishment on beholding the negro boy—the veritable Quashie!

"Da, sa! das da crossin' me you tell 'bout; you no take by de leff—dat lead to ole Jew penn; nor da right—he go to Mon'gew Cassel; de middle Massr Va'n road—he go straight na Moun' Welc'm'."

The young traveller sat for some moments without speaking, or making reply in any way—surprise, as by a spell, holding him silent. He had left the boy on the forward deck of the ship, to look after his luggage; and he had seen him—he could almost swear to it—still on board, as he rode away from the wharf! Moreover, he had ridden a stretch of many miles—most of the way at full gallop, and all of it at a pace with which no pedestrian could possibly have kept up! How, then, was he to account for the lad's presence upon the spot?

This was the first question that occurred to him; and which he put to the darkey, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered from his surprise to be able to speak.

"Quashie foller young buckra—at him pony heels."

The answer went but a short way towards enlightening the "young buckra:" since he still believed it utterly impossible for any human being to have travelled as fast as he had ridden.

"At the pony's heels! What, my black-skin! do you mean to say you have run all the way after me from the landing-place?"

"Ya, sa: dat hab Quashie do."

"But I saw you on board the ship as I started off. How on earth could you have overtaken me?"

"Yaw, massa, dat wa' easy 'nuf. Young buckra, he start off; Quashie, he put him porkmantle in da ox-waggon, an den he foller. Buckra, he go slow at fuss, Quashie soon cotch up, and den easy run 'long wi' da pony—not much in dat, sa."

"Not much! Why, you imp of darkness, I have been riding at the rate of ten miles an hour, and how you've kept up with me is beyond my comprehension! Well, you're a noble runner, that I will say! I'd back you at a foot-race against all comers, whether black ones or white ones. The middle road, you say?"

"Ya, sa, dat de way to Moun' Welc'm'; you soon see de big gate ob de plantation."

Herbert headed his roadster in the direction indicated; and moved onward along the path—his thoughts still dwelling on the odd incident.

He had proceeded but a few lengths of his pony, when he was tempted to look back—partly to ascertain if Quashie was still following him, and partly with the intention of putting a query to this singular escort.

A fresh surprise was in store for him. The darkey was nowhere to be seen! Neither to the right, nor the left, nor yet in the rear, was he visible!

"Where the deuce can the boy have gone?" inquired Herbert, involuntarily, at the same time scanning the underwood on both sides of the road.

"Hya, sa!" answered a voice, that appeared to come out of the ground close behind—while at the same instant the brown mop of Quashie, just visible over the croup of the cob, proclaimed his whereabouts.

How the boy had been able to keep up with the pony was at length explained: he had been *holding on to its tail!*

There was something so ludicrous in the sight, that the young Englishman forgot for a moment the grave thoughts that had been

harassing him; and once more checking his steed into a halt, gave utterance to roars of laughter. The darkey joined in his mirth with a grin that extended his mouth from ear to ear—though he was utterly unconscious of what the young buckra was laughing at. He could not see anything comic in a custom which he was almost daily in the habit of practising—for it was not the first time Quashie had travelled at the tail of a horse.

Journeying about half a mile further along the main road, the entrance-gate of Mount Welcome was reached. There was no lodge—only a pair of grand stone piers, with a wing of strong masonwork on each flank, and a massive folding gate between them.

From the directions Herbert had already received, he might have known this to be the entrance to his uncle's plantation; but Quashie, still clinging to the pony's tail, removed all doubt by crying out,—

"Da's da gate, buckra gemman—da's de way fo' Moun' Welc'm'!"

On passing through the gateway, the mansion itself came in sight—its white walls and green jalousies shining conspicuously at the extreme

end of the long avenue; which last, with its bordering rows of palms and tamarinds, gave to the approach an air of aristocratic grandeur.

Herbert had been prepared for something of this kind. He had heard, at home that his father's brother was a man of great wealth; and this was nearly all his father had himself known respecting him.

The equipage which had transported his more favoured fellow-voyager—and which had passed over the same road about an hour before him—also gave evidence of the grand style in which his uncle lived.

The mansion now before his eyes was in correspondence with what he had heard and seen. There could be no doubt that his uncle was one of the grandees of the island.

The reflection gave him less pleasure than pain. His pride had been already wounded; and as he looked up the noble avenue, he was oppressed with a presentiment that some even greater humiliation was in store for him.

"Tell me, Quashie," said he, after a spell of painful reflection, "was it your master himself who gave you directions about conducting me to Mount Welcome? Or did you have your orders from the overseer?"

"Massr no me speak 'bout you, sa; I no hear him say nuffin."

"The overseer, then?"

"Ya, sa, de obaseeah."

"What did he tell you to do? Tell me as near as you can; and I may make you a present one of these days."

"Gorry, massr buckra! I you tell all he say, 'zactly as he say um. 'Quashie,' say he, 'Quashie,' he say, 'you go down board de big ship; you see dat ere young buckra'—dat war yourseff, sa—'you fotch 'im up to de ox-waggon, you fotch 'im baggage too; you mount 'im on Coco'—da's de pony's name—'and den you fetch him home to *my* house.' Da's all he say—ebbery word."

"To *his* house? Mount Welcome, you mean!"

"No, young buckra gemman—to de obaseeah own house. And now we jess got to da road dat lead dar. Dis way, sa! dis way!"

The darkey pointed to a bye-road, that, forking off from the main avenue, ran in the direction of the ridge, where it entered into a tract of thick woods.

Herbert checked the pony to a halt, and sat gazing at his guide, in mute surprise.

"Dis way, sa!" repeated the boy. "Yonna's de obaseeah's house. You see wha da smoke rise, jess ober de big trees?"

"What do you mean, my good fellow? What have I to do with the overseer's house?"

"We's agwine da, sa."

"Who? you?"

"Boff, sa; an' Coco too."

"Have you taken leave of your senses, you imp of darkness?"

"No, sa; Quashie only do what him bid. Da obaseeah Quashie bid fotch young buckra to him house. Dis yeer's da way."

"I tell you, boy, you must be mistaken. It is to Mount Welcome I am going—my uncle's house—up yonder!"

"No, buckra gemman, me no mistake. Da obaseeah berry partikler 'bout dat same. He tell me you no fo' da great house—da Buff. He say me fotch you to 'im *own* house."

"Are you sure of that?"

Herbert, as he put this interrogatory, leant forward in the saddle, and listened attentively for the reply.

"Lor, buckra gemman! I'se sure ob it as de sun am in de hebbens dar. I swa' it, if you like."

On hearing this positive affirmation, the young Englishman sat for a moment, as if wrapt in a profound and painful reverie. His breast rose and fell as though some terrible truth was breaking upon him, which he was endeavouring to disbelieve.

At this moment, Quashie caught the rein of the bridle, and was about to lead the pony into the bye-path.

"No!" shouted the rider, in a voice loud and angry. "Let go, boy! let go, or I'll give you the whip. This is *my* way."

And, wrenching the rein from the grasp of his sable guide, he headed the pony back into the main avenue.

Then laying on the lash with all his might, he pressed forward, at full gallop, in the direction of the "great house."

CHAPTER XV.

A SLIPPERY FLOOR.

THE carriage conveying Mr. Montagu Smythje from Montego Bay to Mount Welcome, passed up the avenue and arrived at the great house, just one hour before Herbert Vaughan, mounted on his rough roadster, and guided by Quashie, made his appearance at the entrance-gate of the plantation.

Mr. Smythje had arrived at half-past three, P.M. Four was the regular dining hour at Mount Welcome: so that there was just neat time for the valet to unpack the ample valises and portmanteaus, and dress his master for the table.

It had been the aim of Mr. Vaughan to make the introduction of Mr. Smythje to his daughter as effective as possible. He was sage enough to know the power of first appearances.

For this reason, he had managed to keep them apart until the moment of meeting at the dinner-table, when both should appear under the advantage of a full dress.

So far as the impression to be made on Mr.

Smythje was concerned, Mr. Vaughan's scheme was perfectly successful. His daughter really appeared superb—radiant as the crimson quamoclit that glistened amidst the plaits of her hair; graceful as nature, and elegant as art, could make her.

The heart of the cockney felt—perhaps for the first time in his life—that true sentiment of admiration which beauty, combined with virgin modesty, is almost certain to inspire.

For a moment, the remembrance of the ballet girl and the lewd recollections of the *baynio* were obliterated; and a graver and nobler inspiration took their place.

Even vulgar Loftus Vaughan had skill enough to note this effect; but how long it would last—how long the plant of a pure passion would flourish in that uncongenial soil—was a question which it required an abler physiologist than Loftus Vaughan to determine.

The sugar-planter congratulated himself upon his success. Smythje was smitten, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Had the calculating father been equally anxious to perceive a *reciprocity* of this fine first impression, he would have been doomed

to a disappointment. As certainly as that of Mr. Smythje was a sentiment of admiration, so certainly was that of Kate Vaughan a feeling of *dégoût;* or at least of indifference.

In truth, the Londoner had made a most unfortunate *début.* A *contretemps* had occurred in the ceremony of introduction—just at that crisis-moment when all eyes are sharply set, and all ears acutely bent in mutual *reconnoissance.* Mr. Vaughan had committed a grand error in causing the presentation to take place in the grand hall. Ice itself was not more slippery than its floor. The consequence was unavoidable; and the cockney, essaying one of his most graceful attitudes, fell flat upon his face at the feet of her he simply intended to have saluted!

In that fall he had lost everything—every chance of winning Kate Vaughan's heart. A thousand acts of gracefulness, a thousand deeds of heroism, would not have set him up again, after that unfortunate fall. It was a clear paraphrase of the downfall of Humpty Dumpty—the restoration alike hopeless, alike impossible.

Mr. Montagu Smythje was too well stocked with self-complacency to suffer much embar-

rassment from a *lapsus* of so trifling a character. His valet had him upon his feet in a trice; and with a "Haw-haw!" and the remark that the floor was "demmed swippeway," he crept cautiously to his chair, and seated himself.

Though the Londoner had been all his life accustomed to dining well, he could not help indulging in some surprise at the plentiful and luxurious repast that was placed before him.

Perhaps in no part of the world does the table groan under a greater load of rich viands than in the West Indian Islands. In the prosperous times of sugar-planting, a Jamaican dinner was deserving of the name of feast. Turtle was the common soup; and the most sumptuous dishes were arranged thickly over the board. Even the ordinary every-day dessert was a spread worthy of Apicius; and the wines—instead of those dull twin poisons, port and sherry—were south-side Madeira, champagne, claret, and sparkling hock—all quaffed in copious flagons, plenteous as small beer.

These were glorious times for the white-skinned oligarchy of the sugar islands—the days of revel and rollicky living—before the

wedge of Wilberforce split the dark pedestal which propped up their pomp and prosperity.

A dinner of this good old-fashioned style had Loftus Vaughan prepared for his English guest. Behind the chairs appeared troops of coloured attendants, gliding silently over the smooth floor. A constant stream of domestics poured in and out of the hall, fetching and removing the dishes and plates, or carrying the wine decanters in silver coolers. Young girls of various shades of complexion—some nearly white—stood at intervals around the table, fanning the guests with long peacock plumes, and filling the great hall with an artificial current of delicious coolness.

Montagu Smythje was delighted. Even in his "dear metwopolis" he had never dined so luxuriously.

"Spwendid, spwendid—'pon honaw! A dinner fit for a pwince!" he exclaimed, in compliment to his entertainer."

The savoury dishes were partaken of, and removed, and the table, arranged for *dessert*, exhibited that gorgeous profusion which a tropic clime can alone produce—where almost every order of the botanical world supplies some fruit or berry of rarest excellence.

Alone in the intertropical regions of the New World may such variety be seen—a *dessert table* upon which Pomona appears to have poured forth her golden *cornucopiæ*.

The cloth having been removed from the highly-polished table, the sparkling decanters were once more passed round. In honour of his guest, the planter had already made free with his own wines, all of which were of most excellent quality. Loftus Vaughan was at that moment at a maximum of enjoyment.

Just at that very moment, however, a cloud was making its appearance on the edge of the sky.

It was a very little cloud, and still very far off; but, for all that, a careful observer could have seen that its shadow became reflected on the brow of the planter.

Literally speaking, this cloud was an object on the earth, of shape half human, half equine, that appeared near the extreme end of the long avenue, moving towards the house.

When first seen by Loftus Vaughan, it was still distant, though not so far off but that, with the naked eye, he could distinguish a man on horseback.

From that moment he might have been observed to turn about in his chair—at short intervals casting uneasy glances upon the centaurean form that was gradually growing bigger as it advanced.

For a time, the expression on the face of Mr. Vaughan was far from being a marked one. The looks that conveyed it were furtive, and might have passed unnoticed by the superficial observer. They had, in fact, escaped the notice both of his daughter and his guest; and it was not until after the horseman had made halt at the entrance of the bye-path, and was seen coming on for the house, that the attention of either was drawn to the singular behaviour of Mr. Vaughan. Then, however, his nervous anxiety had become so undisguisedly patent, as to elicit from Miss Vaughan an ejaculation of alarm; while the cockney involuntarily exclaimed, "Bless ma soul!" adding the interrogatory,—

"Anything wong, sir?"

"Oh! nothing!" stammered the planter; "only—only—a little surprise—that's all."

"Surprise, papa! what has caused it? Oh, see! yonder is some one on horseback—a man—a young man. I declare it is our own pony

he is riding; and that is Quashie running behind him! How very amusing! Papa, what is it all about?"

"Tut! sit down, child!" commanded the father, in a tone of nervous perplexity. "Sit down, I say! Whoever it be, it will be time enough to know when he arrives. Kate! Kate! 'tis not well-bred of you to interrupt our dessert. Mr. Smythje—glass of Madeira with you, sir?"

"Plesyaw!" answered the exquisite, turning once more to the table, and occupying himself with the decanter.

Kate obeyed the command with a look that expressed both reluctance and surprise. She was slightly awed, too; not so much by the words, as the severe glance that accompanied them. She made no reply, but sat gazing with a mystified air in the face of her father—who, hob-nobbing with his guest, affected not to notice her.

The pony and his rider were no longer visible: as they were now too close to the house to be seen over the sill of the window; but the clattering hoofs could be heard, the sounds coming nearer and nearer.

Mr. Vaughan was endeavouring to appear

collected, and to say something; but his *sang froid* was assumed and unnatural; and being unable to keep up the conversation, an ominous silence succeeded.

The sound of the hoofs ceased to be heard. The pony, having arrived under the windows, had been brought to a halt.

Then there were voices—earnest and rather loud. They were succeeded by the noise of footsteps on the stone stairway. Someone was coming up the steps.

Mr. Vaughan looked aghast. All his fine plans were about to be frustrated. There was a hitch in the programme—Quashie had failed in the performance of *his* part.

"Aha!" ejaculated the planter, with returning delight, as the smooth, trim countenance of his overseer made its appearance above the landing. "Mr. Trusty wishes to speak with me. Your pardon, Mr. Smythje—only for one moment."

Mr. Vaughan rose from his seat, and hastened, as if wishing to meet the overseer, before the latter could enter the room. Trusty, however, had already stepped inside the doorway; and, not being much of a diplomatist, had bluntly declared his errand—in *sotto voce*,

it is true, but still not low enough to hinder a part of his communication from being heard. Among other words, the phrase "your nephew" reached the ears of Kate—at that moment keenly bent to catch every sound.

The reply was also partially heard, though delivered in a low and apparently tremulous voice:—"Show him—summer-house—garden—tell him to wait—there presently."

Mr. Vaughan turned back to the table with a half-satisfied air. He was fancying that he had escaped from his dilemma, at least, for the time; but the expression which he perceived on the countenance of his daughter restored his suspicions that all was not right.

Scarce a second was he left in doubt, for almost on the instant, Kate cried out, in a tone of pleased surprise,—

"Oh, papa, what do I hear? Did not Mr. Trusty say something about 'your nephew'? After all, has cousin come? Is it he who ——?"

"Kate, my child," quickly interrupted her father, and appearing not to have understood her interrogatory, "you may retire to your room. Mr. Smythje and I would like to have

our cigar; and the smoke of tobacco don't agree with you. Go, child—go!"

The young girl instantly rose from her chair, and hastened to obey the command—notwithstanding the protestations of Mr. Smythje, who looked as if he would have much preferred her company to the cigar.

But her father hurriedly repeated the "Go, child—go!" accompanying the words with another of those severe glances which had already awed and mystified her.

Before she had passed fairly out of the great hall, however, her thoughts reverted to the unanswered interrogatory; and as she crossed the threshold of her chamber, she was heard muttering to herself:

"I wonder if cousin be come!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE KIOSK.

A PORTION of the level platform, on which Mount Welcome was built, extended to the rear of the dwelling; and was occupied, as already described, by a garden filled with rare and beautiful plants. Near the midst of this garden, and about a dozen paces from the house, stood a small detached building—a summer-house—the materials of which were ornamental woods of various kinds, all natives of the island, famed for such products. The pieces composing this summer-house, or "kiosk," as it was habitually called, had all been cut and carved with skilful care; and the whole structure had been designed as a representation of a miniature temple, with a cupola upon its top, surmounted by a gilded and glittering vane.

Inside there were neither stairs nor partitions—the whole space being taken up by a single apartment. There were no glass win-

dows: but all around, the walls were open, or closed only with Venetian blinds, the laths of which were of the finest mahogany. A Chinese mat covered the floor, and a rustic table of bamboo cane pieces, with some half-dozen chairs of like manufacture, constituted the principal part of the furniture.

On the aforesaid table stood an inkstand of silver, elaborately chased, with plume pens pertaining to it. Some writing-paper lay beside it; and on a silver tray there were wafers, red sealing-wax, and a signet seal. An escritoire stood on one side; and two or three dozen volumes placed upon the top of this—with a like number thrown carelessly on chairs—formed the library of Mount Welcome.

Some magazines and journals lay upon the centre-table, and a box of best Havannahs—open and half used—showed that the summer-house served occasionally for a smoking-room.

It was sometimes styled the "Library," though its purposes were many. Mr. Vaughan, at times, used it for the reception of visitors—such as might have come upon errands of business—such, in short, as were not deemed worthy of being introduced to the company of the grand hall.

Just at the moment when Kate Vaughan quitted the dinner-table, a young man was shown into this detached apartment, Mr. Trusty, the overseer, acting as his chaperon.

It is not necessary to say that this young man was Herbert Vaughan.

How he came to be conducted thither is easily explained. On learning from Quashie the destination designed for him—aggrieved and angry at the revelation—he had hurried in hot haste up to the house. To Mr. Trusty, who was keeping guard at the bottom of the stairway, he had announced his relationship with Mr. Vaughan, and demanded an interview —making his requisition in such energetic terms as to disturb the habitual *sang-froid* of the overseer, and compel him to the instantaneous delivery of his message.

Indeed, so indignant did Herbert feel, that he would have mounted the steps and entered the house without further parley, had not Mr. Trusty put forth his blandest entreaties to prevent such a terrible catastrophe.

"Patience, my good sir!" urged the overseer, interposing himself between the new comer and the stairway; "Mr. Vaughan *will* see you, presently—not just this moment; he is en-

gaged—company with him. The family's at dinner."

So far from soothing the chafed spirit of the young man, the announcement was only a new mortification. At dinner, and with company—the cabin-passenger, of course—the ward—not even a relative—while he, the nephew—no dinner for him!

In truth, Herbert recognized in this incident a fresh outrage.

With an effort, be gave up the idea of ascending the stairs. Poor though he was, he was nevertheless a gentleman; and good breeding stepped in to restrain him from this unbidden intrusion: though more than ever did he feel convinced that an insult was put upon him, and one that almost appeared premeditated.

He stood balancing in his mind whether he should turn upon his heel, and depart from his uncle's house without entering it. A feather would have brought down the scale. The feather fell on the negative side, and decided him to remain.

On being conducted into the summer-house and left to himself, he showed no wish to be seated; but paced the little apartment backward and forward in a state of nervous agitation.

He took but slight heed of aught that was there. He was in no mood for minutely observing—though he could not help noticing the luxurious elegance that surrounded him: the grandeur of the great house itself; the splendid *parterres* and gardens filled with plants and flowers of exquisite beauty and fragrant perfume.

These fine sights, however, instead of soothing his chafed spirit, only made him more bitterly sensible of his own poor fortunes, and the immeasurable distance that separated him from his proud, rich uncle.

Through the open sides of the kiosk he merely glanced hastily at the grounds; and then his eyes became bent upon the great house—directed habitually towards an entrance at the back that by a flight of steps conducted into the garden. By this entrance he expected his uncle would come out; and in angry impatience did he await his coming.

Had he seen the beautiful eyes that were, at that moment, tenderly gazing upon him from behind the lattice-work of the opposite window, perhaps the sight would have gone far towards soothing his irate soul. But he saw them not. The jalousies were closed; and though

from the shadowy interior of the chamber, the kiosk and its occupant were in full view, the young Englishman had no suspicion that he was at that moment the object of observation—perhaps of admiration—by a pair of the loveliest eyes in the island of Jamaica.

After turning, for the twentieth time, across the floor—at each turn scanning the stairs with fresh impatience—he somewhat spitefully laid hold of a book, and opened it—in the hope of being able to kill time over its pages.

The volume which came into his hands—by chance: he had not chosen it—was but little calculated to tranquillize his troubled spirit. It was a digest of the statutes of Jamaica relating to slavery—the famous, or rather infamous, *black code* of the island.

There he read: that a man might mutilate his own image in the person of a fellow-man—torture him, even to death, and escape with the punishment of a paltry fine! That a man with a black skin—or even white, if at all tainted with African blood—could hold no real estate, no office of trust; could give no evidence in a court of law—not even had he been witness of the crime of murder; that such a man must not keep or ride a horse; must

not carry a gun, or other weapon of defence; must not defend himself when assaulted; must not defend wife, sister, or daughter—even when ruffian hands were tearing them from him for the most unholy of purposes! In short, that a *man of colour* must do nothing to make himself different from a docile and submissive brute!

To the young Englishman, fresh from a Christian land—at that period ringing with the eloquent denunciations of a Wilberforce, and the philanthropic appeals of a Clarkson—the perusal of this execrable statute-book, instead of producing tranquillity, only infused fresh bitterness into his soul; and stamping his foot fiercely on the floor, he flung the detestable volume back to its place.

At that moment—just as he had reached the maximum of reckless defiance—a noise was heard in the direction of the great house, and the door of the stair-landing was seen to turn on its hinges.

Of course, he expected to see a surly old uncle, and was resolved to be as surly as he.

On the contrary, and to his pleased surprise, he beheld in the doorway a beautiful young girl, bending her eyes upon him with

an affectionate look, and as if courting recognition!

A sudden revulsion of feeling passed through his whole frame; his countenance changed its angry expression to one of admiration; and, unable to utter a word, he remained silently gazing on this lovely apparition.

CHAPTER XVII.

A BOLD RESOLVE.

FAR better would it have been for Mr. Vaughan —at least, for the success of his schemes—had he adopted an honourable course with his nephew; and at once introduced him, openly and above-board, to his table, his daughter, and his aristocratic guest.

Had he known before dinner what he was made aware of in less than five minutes after it, he would, in all likelihood, have adopted this course. It would have spared him the chagrin he was made to feel, on Mr. Smythje reporting to him the encounter he had had on board ship—which the latter proceeded to do, the moment after Kate had been so unceremoniously dismissed from the hall.

Smythje had also overheard the communication of the overseer—the word "nephew," at least—and this recalled to his mind—not without some unpleasant remembrance of the

satire from which he had suffered—the steerage passenger who had treated him so brusquely on board the *Sea Nymph*.

The miserable bubble was burst; and the onus of a somewhat bungling explanation was put upon the shoulders of the pompous planter —into whose heart a bitter drop of gall was infused by the disclosure.

As the deception could be sustained no longer, the relationship was necessarily acknowledged; but the spark of ire thus introduced boded a still more unwelcome reception to the unlucky nephew.

The planter partially cleared himself of the scrape by a false representation. In other words, he told a lie, in saying that his nephew had not been expected. Smythje knew it was a lie, but said nothing; and the subject was allowed to drop.

Loftus Vaughan was a common man; and the course he had followed—shallow and self-defeating—was proof of an intellect as low as its morality.

By his shabby treatment of his nephew, he was investing that young man with a romantic interest in the eyes of his daughter, that perhaps might never have been felt, or, at all

events, not so readily. Misfortune—especially that which springs from persecution—is a grand suggester of sympathy—that is, when the appeal is made to noble hearts; and the heart of Kate Vaughan was of this quality.

Moreover, this surreptitious dealing with the poor relative—smuggling him into the house like a bale of contraband goods—was sufficient of itself to pique the curiosity of those whom it was meant to mystify.

So far as Kate Vaughan was concerned, that very effect it produced: for, on leaving the dining-room—from which, to say the truth, she was only too happy to escape—the young girl glided at once to that window that opened out upon the garden; and, parting the lattice with her fingers, looked eagerly through.

In the brief undertone that had passed between her father and the overseer, she had heard the command, "Show him to the summer-house." She knew that the summer-house was within view of her chamber-window. She was curious to see what in all her life she had never beheld—a *cousin*. Her curiosity was not balked. On looking through the lattice, her cousin was before her eyes—pacing the little apartment as described.

With his braided frock, buttoned tightly over his breast—glittering Hessian boots on his well-turned limbs—his neat three-cornered hat set lightly over his brown curls—he was not a sight likely to terrify a young girl—least of all a cousin. Even the bold, somewhat fierce, expression upon his countenance—at that moment reflecting the angry emotions that were stirring within him—did not, in the eyes of the young creole, detract from the beauty of the face she saw before her.

What impression did the sight produce? Certainly not terror — certainly not dislike. On the contrary, she appeared gratified by it: else, why did she continue her gaze, and gaze so earnestly? Why became her eyes filled with fire, and fixed, as by some fascination? Why did her young bosom heave and fall, as if some new, undefinable emotion was for the first time germinating within it?

For some moments she remained in the same attitude, gazing steadfastly and silent. Then, without turning, there escaped from her lips, low murmured, and as if by an involuntary effort, the interrogatory,—

"Yola! is he not beautiful?"

"Beautiful, missa," repeated the maid, who

had not yet beheld the object for whom this admiration was meant; "who beautiful?"

"Who? My cousin, Yola."

"You cousin—what cousin, young missa?"

"Look yonder, and see! That's my cousin."

"I see a man."

"Ah! and saw you ever such a man?"

"True, missa; never see man look so—he surely angry, missa?"

"Angry?"

"Berry angry. He go back, he go forward, like hyena in a cage."

"He is only impatient at being kept waiting. My word! I think he looks all the better for it. Ah! see how his eye flashes. Oh! Yola, how handsome he is—how different from the young men of this island. Is he not a beautiful fellow?"

"He curled hair, like Cubina!"

"Cubina! ha! ha! ha! This Cubina must be a very Proteus, as well as an Adonis. Do you see any other resemblance, except in the hair? If so, my cousin may, perhaps, resemble *me*."

"Cubina much darker in de colour ob him skin, missa."

"Ha! ha! that is not unlikely."

"Cubina, same size—same shape—'zactly same shape.'

"Then I should say that Cubina is a good shape; for, if I know anything of what a man ought to be, that cousin of mine is the correct thing. See those arms! they look as if he could drag down that great tamarind with them! Gracious me! he appears as if he intended doing it! Surely, he must be very impatient? And, after his coming so far, for papa to keep him waiting in this fashion! I really think I should go down to him myself. What is your opinion, Yola? Would it be wrong for me to go and speak with him? He is my cousin."

"What am cousin, missa?"

"Why, cousin is—is—something like a brother—only not exactly—that is—it's not quite the same thing."

"Brudder! Oh, missa! if he Yola brudder, she him speak; she care not who be angry."

"True, Yola; and if he were my brother—alas! I have none—I should do the same without hesitation. But with a cousin—that's different. Besides, papa don't like this cousin of mine—for some reason or another. I wonder what he can have against him. I can't

see; and surely it can be no reason for *my* not liking him? And, surely, his being my cousin is just why I should go down and talk to him.

"Besides," continued the young girl, speaking to herself rather than to the maid, "he appears very, very impatient. Papa may keep him waiting—who knows how long? since he is so taken up with this Mr. Montagu What's-his-name! Well, I may be doing wrong—perhaps papa will be angry—perhaps he won't know anything about it! Right or wrong, I'll go! I *shall* go!"

So saying, the young creole snatched a scarf from the fauteuil; flung it over her shoulders; and, gliding from the chamber, tripped silently along the passage that conducted towards the rear of the dwelling.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ENCOUNTER OF THE COUSINS.

Opening the door, and passing out, Kate Vaughan paused timidly upon the top of the stairway that led down into the garden. Her steps were stayed by a feeling of bashful reserve, that was struggling to restrain her from carrying out a resolve somewhat hastily formed.

Her hesitancy was but the matter of a moment; for on the next—her resolution having become fixed—she descended the stairs, and advanced blushingly towards the kiosk.

Herbert had not quite recovered from surprise at the unexpected apparition, when he was saluted by the endearing interrogatory,—

"Are you my cousin?"

The question, so *naïvely* put, remained for a moment unanswered: for the tone of kindness in which it was spoken had caused him a fresh surprise, and he was too much confused to make answer.

He soon found speech, however, for the hypothetical reply:—

"If you are the daughter of Mr. Loftus Vaughan——"

"I am."

"Then I am proud of calling myself your cousin. I am Herbert Vaughan—from England."

Still under the influence of the slight which he believed had been put upon him, Herbert made this announcement with a certain stiffness of manner, which the young girl could not fail to notice. It produced a momentary incongeniality, that was in danger of degenerating into a positive coolness; and Kate, who had come forth under the promptings of an affectionate instinct, trembled under a repulse, the cause of which she could not comprehend.

It did not, however, hinder her from courteously rejoining:—

"We were expecting you—as father had received your letter; but not to-day. Papa said not before to-morrow. Permit me, cousin, to welcome you to Jamaica."

Herbert bowed profoundly.

Again the young creole felt her warm im-

pulses painfully checked; and, blushing with embarrassment, she stood in an attitude of indecision.

Herbert, whose heart had been melting like snow under a tropic sun, now became sensible that he was committing a rudeness; which, so far from being natural to him, was costing him a struggle to counterfeit.

Why should the sins of the father be visited on the child—and such a child?

With a reflection kindred to this, the young man hastened to change his attitude of cold reserve.

"Thanks for your kind welcome!" said he, now speaking in a tone of affectionate frankness; "But, fair cousin, you have not told me your name."

"Catherine—though I am usually addressed by the shorter synonym, Kate."

"Catherine! that is a family name with us. My father's mother, and your father's, too—our grandmamma—was a Catherine. Was it also your mother's name?"

"No; my mother was called Quasheba."

"Quasheba! that is a very singular name."

"Do you think so, cousin? I am sometimes called Quasheba myself—only by the old peo-

ple of the plantation, who knew my mother. Lilly Quasheba they call me. Papa does not like it, and forbids them."

"Was your mother an Englishwoman?"

"Oh, no! she was born in Jamaica, and died while I was very young—too young to remember her. Indeed, cousin, I may say I never knew what it was to have a mother!"

"Nor I much, cousin Kate. My mother also died early. But are you my only cousin?—no sisters nor brothers?"

"Not one. Ah! I wish I had sisters and brothers!"

"Why do you wish that?"

"Oh, how can you ask such a question? For companions, of course."

"Fair cousin! I should think *you* would find companions enough in this beautiful island."

"Ah! enough, perhaps; but none whom I like—at least, not as I think I should like a sister or brother. Indeed," added the young girl, in a reflective tone, "I sometimes feel lonely enough!"

"Ah!"

"Perhaps, now that we are to have guests, it will be different. Mr. Smythje is very amusing."

"Mr. Smythje! Who is he?"

"What! you do not know Mr. Smythje? I thought that you and he came over in the same ship? Papa said so; and that *you* were not to be here until to-morrow. I think you have taken him by surprise in coming to-day. But why did you not ride out with Mr. Smythje? He arrived here only one hour before you, and has just dined with us. I have left the table this moment, for papa and him to have their cigars. But, bless me, cousin! Pardon me for not asking—perhaps *you* have not dined yet?"

"No," replied Herbert, in a tone that expressed chagrin, "nor am I likely to dine here, to-day."

The storm of queries with which, in the simplicity of her heart, the young creole thus assailed him, once more brought back that train of bitter reflections, from which her fair presence and sweet converse had for the moment rescued him. Hence the character of his reply.

"And why, cousin Herbert?" asked she, with a marked air of surprise. "If you have not dined, it is not too late. Why not here?"

"Because"—and the young man drew himself proudly up—"I prefer going without dinner to dining where I am not welcome. In Mount Welcome, it seems, I am *not* welcome."

"Oh, cousin——!"

The words, and the appealing accent, were alike interrupted. The door upon the landing turned upon its hinge, and Loftus Vaughan appeared in the doorway.

"Your father?"

"My father!"

"Kate!" cried the planter, in a tone that bespoke displeasure, "Mr. Smythje would like to hear you play upon the harp. I have been looking for you in your room, and all over the house. What are you doing out there?"

The language was coarse and common—the manner that of a vulgar man flushed with wine.

"Oh, papa! cousin Herbert is here. He is waiting to see you."

"Come you here, then! Come at once. Mr. Smythje is waiting for you." And with this imperious rejoinder Mr. Vaughan reentered the house.

"Cousin! I must leave you."

"Yes; I perceive it. One more worthy than I claims your company. Go! Mr. Smythje is impatient."

"It is papa."

"Kate! Kate! are you coming? Haste, girl! haste, I say!"

"Go, Miss Vaughan! Farewell!"

"Miss Vaughan? Farewell?"

Mystified and distressed by those strange-sounding words, the young girl stood for some seconds undecided, but the voice of her father again came ringing along the corridor—now in tones irate and commanding. Obedience could no longer be delayed; and, with a half-puzzled, half-reproachful glance at her cousin, she reluctantly parted from his presence.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SURLY RECEPTION.

After the young creole had disappeared within the entrance, Herbert remained in a state of indecision as to how he should act.

He no longer needed an interview with his uncle, for the sake of having an explanation. This new slight had crowned his convictions that he was there an unwelcome guest; and no possible apology could now retrieve the ill-treatment he had experienced.

He would have walked off on the instant without a word; but, stung to the quick by the series of insults he had received, the instinct of retaliation had sprung up within him, and determined him to stay—at all events, until he could meet his relative face to face, and reproach him with his unnatural conduct. He was recklessly indifferent as to the result.

With this object, he continued in the kiosk—his patience being now baited with the prospect of that slight satisfaction.

He knew that his uncle might not care

much for what he should say: it was not likely such a nature would be affected by reproach. Nevertheless, the proud young man could not resist the temptation of giving words to his defiance—as the only means of mollifying the mortification he so keenly felt.

The tones of a harp, vibrating through the far interior of the dwelling, faintly reached the kiosk; but they fell on his ear without any soothing effect. Rather did they add to his irritation: for he could almost fancy the music was meant to mock him in his misery.

But no; on second thoughts, that could not be. Surely, that sweet strain was not intended to tantalize him. He caught the air. It was one equally appropriate to the instrument and to his own situation. It was the "Exile of Erin."

Presently a voice was heard accompanying the music—a woman's voice—easily recognizable as that of Kate Vaughan.

He listened attentively. At intervals he could hear the words. How like to his own thoughts!

"'Sad is my fate,' said the heart-broken stranger;
'The wild deer and wolf to the covert can flee,
But I have no refuge from famine and danger—
A home and a country remain not to me!'"

Perhaps the singer intended it as a song of sympathy for him? It certainly exerted an influence over his spirits, melting him to a degree of tenderness.

Not for long, however, did this feeling continue. As the last notes of the lay died away in the distant corridor, the rough baritones of the planter and his guest were heard joining in loud laughter—perhaps some joke at the expense of himself, the poor exile?

Shortly after, a heavy footstep echoed along the passage. The door opened; and Herbert perceived it was his uncle, who had at length found time to honour him with an interview.

Though so joyous but the moment before, all traces of mirth had disappeared from the countenance of Loftus Vaughan, when he presented himself before the eyes of his nephew. His face, habitually red, was fired with the wine he had been drinking to the hue of scarlet. Nevertheless, an ominous mottling of a darker colour upon his broad massive brow foretold the ungracious reception his relative was likely to have at his hands.

His first words were uttered in a tone of insolent coolness:—

"So you are my brother's son, are you?"

There was no extending of the hand, no gesture—not even a smile of welcome!

Herbert checked his anger, and simply answered,—

"I believe so."

"And pray, sir, what errand has brought you out to Jamaica?"

"If you have received my letter, as I presume you have, it will have answered that question."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Vaughan, with an attempt at cynicism, but evidently taken down by the unexpected style of the reply. "And what, may I ask, do you purpose doing here?"

"Have not the slightest idea," answered Herbert, with a provoking air of independence.

"Have you any profession?"

"Unfortunately, not any."

"Any trade?—I suppose not."

"Your suppositions are perfectly correct."

"Then, sir, how do you expect to get your bread?"

"Earn it, the best way I can."

"Beg it, more likely, as your father before you: all his life begging it, and from me."

"In that respect I shall not resemble him. You would be the last man I should think of begging from."

"S'death! sirrah, you are impertinent. This is fine language to me, after the disgrace you have already brought upon me!"

"Disgrace?"

"Yes, sir, disgrace. Coming out here as a pauper, in the steerage of a ship! And you must needs boast of your relationship—letting all the world know that you are my nephew."

"Boast of the relationship!" repeated Herbert, with a smile of contempt. "Ha! ha! ha! I suppose you refer to my having answered a question asked me by this pretty jack-a-box you are playing with. Boast of it, indeed! Had I known you then as well as I do now, I should have been ashamed to acknowledge it!"

"After that, sir," shouted Mr. Vaughan, turning purple with rage—"after that, sir, no more words! You shall leave my house this minute."

"I had intended to have left it some minutes sooner. I only stayed to have an opportunity of telling you what I think of you."

"What is that, sir? what is that?"

The angry youth had summoned to the top of his tongue a few of the strongest epithets he could think of, and was about to hurl them into his uncle's teeth, when, on glancing up, he caught sight of an object that caused him to change his intention. It was the beautiful face of the young creole, that appeared through the half-open lattice of the window opposite. She was gazing down upon him and his uncle, and listening to the dialogue with an anguished expression of countenance.

"He is *her* father," muttered Herbert to himself; "for *her* sake I shall not say the words;" and, without making any reply to the last interrogatory of his uncle, he strode out of the kiosk, and was walking away.

"Stay, sir!" cried the planter, somewhat taken aback by the turn things had taken. "A word before you go—if you *are* going."

Herbert turned upon his heel and listened.

"Your letter informs me that you are without funds. It shall not be said that a relative of Loftus Vaughan left his house penniless and unprovided. In this purse there are twenty pounds currency of the island. Take it; but on the condition that you say nothing of what has occurred here; and, furthermore, that you

keep to yourself that you are the nephew of Loftus Vaughan."

Without saying a word, Herbert took the proffered purse; but, in the next moment, the chink of the gold pieces was heard upon the gravel walk as he dashed the bag at the feet of his uncle.

Then, turning to the astonished planter, and measuring him with a look that scorned all patronage, he faced once more to the path, and walked proudly away.

The angry "Begone, sir!" vociferated after him, was only addressed to his back, and was altogether unheeded. Perhaps it was even unheard: for the expression in the eyes of the young man told that at that moment his attention was occupied elsewhere.

As he walked towards the house—with the design of going round it to get upon the front avenue—his glance was directed upwards to the window where that beautiful face had been just seen. The lattice was now closed; and he endeavoured to pierce the sombre shadows behind it. The face was no longer there. No eyes met his.

He glanced back towards the kiosk to see

if he might linger a moment. His uncle was in a bent attitude, gathering the scattered pieces of gold. In this position the shrubbery concealed him.

Herbert was about to glide nearer to the window, and summon his cousin by name, when he heard his own pronounced, in a soft whisper, and with the endearing prefix "cousin."

Distinctly he heard "Cousin Herbert!" and as if spoken around the angle of the building.

He hastened thither; for that was his proper path by which to arrive at the front of the house.

On turning the wall, he looked up. He saw that another window opened from the same chamber. Thence came the sweet summons, and there appeared the fair face for which he was searching.

"Oh, cousin Herbert! do not go in anger! Papa has done wrong—very wrong, I know; but he has been taking much wine—he is not ——Good cousin, you will pardon him?"

Herbert was about to make reply, when the young creole continued:—

"You said in your letter you had no money.

You have refused father's—you will not refuse mine? It is very little. It is all I have. Take it!"

A bright object glistened before his eyes, and fell with a metallic chink at his feet. He looked down. A small silk purse containing coin, with a blue ribbon attached, was seen lying upon the ground.

The young man raised it, and, holding it in one hand, hesitated for a moment—as if he had thoughts of accepting it. It was not that, however, but another thought that was passing in his mind.

His resolve was soon taken.

"Thanks!" said he. "Thanks, cousin Kate!" he added, with increasing warmth. "*You* have meant kindly, and though we may never meet again——"

"Oh, say not so!" interrupted the young girl, with an appealing look.

"Yes," continued he, "it is probable we never shall. Here there is no home for me. I must go hence; but, wherever I may go, I shall not soon forget this kindness. I may never have an opportunity of repaying it—you are beyond the necessity of aught that a humble relative could do for you; but remem-

ber, Kate Vaughan! should you ever stand in need of a strong arm and a stout heart, there is one of your name who will not fail you!

"Thanks!" he repeated, detaching the ribbon from the bag, and flinging the latter, with its contents, back through the open window. Then, fastening the ribbon to the breast-button of his coat, he added: "I shall feel richer with the possession of this token than with all the wealth of your father's estate. Farewell! and God bless you, my generous cousin!"

Before the young creole could repeat her offer, or add another word of counsel or consolation, he had turned the angle of the building, and passed out of sight.

CHAPTER XX.

THE JEW'S PENN.

While these scenes were transpiring upon the plantation of Mount Welcome, others of a still more exciting nature were being enacted on that which adjoined it—the property of Jacob Jessuron, slave-merchant and penn-keeper.

Besides a "baracoon" in the Bay, where his slaves were usually exposed for sale, the Jew was owner of a large plantation in the country, on which he habitually resided. It lay contiguous to the estate of the Custos Vaughan—separated from the latter by one of the wooded ridges already mentioned as bounding the valley of Mount Welcome.

Like the latter, it had once been a sugar estate, and an extensive one; but that was before Jessuron became its owner. Now it was in the condition termed *ruinate*. The fields where the golden cane had waved in the tropic breeze were choked up by a tangled

"second growth," restoring them almost to their primitive wildness. With that quickness characteristic of equatorial vegetation, huge trees had already sprung up, and stood thickly over the ground—logwoods, bread-nuts, cotton, and calabash trees, which, with their pendent parasites, almost usurped dominion over the soil. Here and there, where the fields still remained open, instead of cultivation, there appeared only the wild nursery of nature—glades mottled with flowering weeds, as the Mexican horn-poppy, swallow-worts, West Indian vervains, and small *passifloræ*.

At intervals, where the underwood permitted them to peep out, might be seen stretches of "dry wall," or stone fence, without mortar or cement, mostly tumbled down, the ruins thickly trellised with creeping plants—as convolvuli, cereus, and aristolochia; cleome, with the cheerful blossoming *lantana*; and, spreading over all, like the web of a gigantic spider, the yellow leafless stems of the American dodder.

In the midst of this domain, almost reconquered by nature, stood the "great house"—except in size, no longer deserving the appellation. It consisted rather of a *pile* than a single building—the old "sugar works" hav-

ing been joined under the same roof with the dwelling—and negro cabins, stables, offices, all inclosed within an immense high wall, that gave to the place the air of a penitentiary or barrack, rather than that of a country mansion. The enclosure was a modern construction—an afterthought—designed for a purpose very different from that of sugar-making.

Garden there was none, though evidence that there *had been* was seen everywhere around the building, in the trees that still bloomed: some loaded with delicious fruits, others with clustering flowers, shedding their incense on the air. Half wild, grew citrons, and *avocado* pears, sop and custard apples, mangoes, guavas, and pawpaws; while the crown-like tops of cocoa-palms soared high above the humble denizens of this wild orchard, their recurvant fronds drooping as in sorrow at the desolation that surrounded them.

Close to the buildings stood several huge trees, whose tortuous limbs, now leafless, rendered it easy to identify them. They were the giants of the West Indian forest—the silk-cotton tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*). The limbs of these vegetable monsters—each itself as large as an ordinary tree—were loaded with parasites of

many species; among which might be distinguished ragged *cactacæ*, with various species of wild pines, from the noble *vriesia* to the hoary, beard-like "Spanish moss," whose long streaming festoons waved like winding-sheets in the breeze—an appropriate draping for the eyrie of the black vultures (John Crows) that might at all times be seen seated in solemn silence upon the topmost branches.

In the olden time, this plantation had borne the name of "Happy Valley"; but during the ownership of Jessuron, this designation—perhaps deemed inappropriate—had been generally dropped; and the place was never spoken of by any other name than that of the "Jew's Penn."

Into a "penn" (grazing farm) Jessuron had changed it, and it served well enough for the purpose: many of the old sugar fields, now overgrown by the valuable Guinea grass, affording excellent pasturage for horses and cattle.

In breeding and rearing the former for the use of the sugar estates, and fattening the latter for the beef markets of the Bay, the industrious Israelite had discovered a road to riches, as short as that he had been travelling in the capacity of slave-dealer; and of late

years he had come to regard the latter only as a secondary calling.

In his old age, Jessuron had become ambitious of social distinction; and for this reason, was desirous of sinking the slave-merchant in the more respectable profession of penn-keeper. He had even succeeded so far in his views as to have himself appointed a justice of the peace—an office that in Jamaica, as elsewhere, is more distinctive of wealth than respectability.

In addition to penn-keeper, the Jew was also an extensive spice-cultivator, or rather spice-gatherer: for the indigenous pimento forests that covered the hills upon his estate required no cultivation—nothing further than to collect the aromatic berries, and cure them on the *barbacoa*.

Though changed from a plantation to a penn, the estate of Jacob Jessuron was not less a scene of active industrial life.

In the fields adjacent to the house, and through the glades of Guinea grass, horses and half-wild cattle might be seen in turns neighing and bellowing, pursued by mounted herdsmen, black and half-naked.

Among the groves of pimento on the hills,

gangs of negro wenches could be heard screaming and chattering continually, as they picked the allspice berries from the branches; or, with the filled baskets poised on their heads, marched in long, chanting files towards the *barbacoa:*

Outside the gate-entrance, upon the broad avenue leading to the main road, negro horse-tamers might every day be seen, giving their first lessons to rough colts fresh caught from the pastures; while inside the grand enclosure, fat oxen were being slaughtered to supply the markets of the Bay—huge, gaunt dogs holding carnival over the offal—while black butchers, naked to the waist, their brown arms reeking with red gore, stalked over the ground, brandishing blood-stained blades, and other instruments of their sanguinary calling.

Such scenes might be witnessed diurnally on the estate of Jacob Jessuron; but on the day succeeding that on which the slave-merchant had made his unsuccessful errand to Mount Welcome, a spectacle of a somewhat rarer kind was about to be exhibited at the penn.

The scene chosen for this exhibition was an inner inclosure, or courtyard, contiguous to the dwelling—the great house itself forming

one side of this court, and opening upon it by a broad verandah, of a dingy, dilapidated appearance.

Vis-à-vis with the dwelling was another large building which shut in the opposite side of the court—the two being connected by high massive walls, that completed the quadrangle. A strong double gate, opening near the centre of one of these walls, was the way out—that is, to the larger enclosure of the cattle-penn.

From the absence of chimneys and windows, as well as from its plain style of architecture, the building that stood opposite the dwelling-house might have been taken for some large granary or barn. But a peep into its interior at once controverted this idea. Inside could be seen groups of human beings, of all colours, from ebony black to jaundice yellow, in all attitudes—seated, standing, or lying upon the floor—and not a few of them, in pairs, manacled to one another. Their attitudes were not more various than the expressions upon their faces. Some looked sad and sullen; some glanced fearfully around, as if waking from horrid dreams, and under the belief that they were realities; others wore the

vacant stare of idiotcy; while here and there a group—apparently regardless of past, present, or future—chattered in their barbaric language with an air of gaiety that bespoke the most philosophic *insouciance*.

The building that contained them was the baracoon—the storehouse of the slave-merchant. Its occupants were his stores!

The "stock" had been just replenished by the cargo of the slave-ship, though there were also some old "bales" on hand; and these were in the act of entertaining the new comers, and initiating them into the ways of the place. Their means of showing hospitality had been limited—as testified by the empty calabashes and clean-scraped wooden platters that lay scattered over the floor. Not a grain of rice, not a spoonful of the pepper-pot, not a slice of plantain, was left. The emptiness of the vessels showed that the rations had been as short as the viands were coarse and common.

Outside, in the yard, were many groups, happier to escape from the stifled atmosphere of their crowded quarters; though that was freedom when compared with the 'tween-decks of the *middle passage*.

Each group was gathered around some old

hand—some compatriot who had preceded them across the great sea—and who, himself initiated into slavery under a western sky, was giving them some notions of what they had to expect. Eager looks of all, from time to time, directed towards the verandah, told that they were awaiting some event of more than ordinary interest.

There were white men in the courtyard—three of them. Two were of dark complexion—so swarth that many of the coloured slaves were as fair-skinned as they. These two men were lounging by the stairway of the verandah—one of them seated upon the steps. Both were sparely clad in check shirts and trousers, having broad-brimmed palmetto hats on their heads, and rough buskins on their feet and ankles.

Each carried a long, rapier-like blade—a *macheté*—hanging over his hip in its leathern sheath; while a brace of fierce dogs—looped in cotton-rope leashes, attached to belts worn around their waists—crouched upon the ground at their feet.

The faces of these men were clean-shaven—a pointed chin-tuft, or "bigote," alone being left; and the hair on the heads of both was

close-cropped. Their sharp, angular features were thus fully displayed, denoting a high order of intelligence; which might have produced a pleasing effect, but for the pronounced expression of cruelty which accompanied it.

The exclamations that from time to time escaped from their lips, with the few words of conversation that passed between them, bespoke them of Spanish race. Their costume—their arms and accoutrements—their comrades, the fierce dogs—plainly proclaimed their calling, as well as the country from whence they came. They were *caçadores de negros*—negro-hunters from the Island of Cuba.

The third white man who appeared in the courtyard differed essentially from these—not so much in colour, for he was also of swarth complexion—but in size, costume, and calling. A pair of horse-skin riding-boots reached up to his thighs, on the heels of which appeared heavy spurs, with rowels three inches in diameter. A sort of monkey-jacket of thick cloth—notwithstanding its unsuitableness to the climate—hung down to his hips; under which appeared a waistcoat of scarlet plush, with tarnished metal buttons, and a wool comforter of the same flaming colour. Crowning all was a

felt hat; which, like the other articles of his dress, gave evidence of exposure to all weathers —sun and rain, storm and tornado.

A thick shock of curling hair, so dark in colour as to pass for black; a heavy beard, jet black, and running most of the way around his mouth; amber-coloured eyes, with a sinister, shining light that never seemed to pale; lips of an unnatural redness gleaming through the black beard; and a nose of aquiline oblique, were the points in the personal appearance of this man that most prominently presented themselves.

The effect of this combination was to impress you with the conviction, that the individual in question belonged to the same nationality as the proprietor of the penn. Such was in reality the case: for the bearded man was another of the race of Abraham, and one of its least amiable specimens. His name was Ravener, his calling that of overseer: he was the overseer of Jessuron. The symbol of his profession he carried under his arm—a huge cart-whip. He had it by him at all hours—by night, as by day—for by night, as by day, was he accustomed to make use of it. And the victims

of his long lash were neither oxen nor horses —they were men and *women!*

No sparing use made he of this hideous implement. "Crack, crack!" was it heard from morn to eve; "crack, crack!" from eve to midnight; if need be, from midnight to morning again: for some said that the overseer of Jessuron never slept. "Crack, crack!" did he go through the courtyard, apparently proud of exhibiting his power before the newly-arrived negroes—here and there swinging his long bitter lash among the groups, as if to break up and scatter them in sheer wantonness.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FIERY BAPTISM.

It was about twelve o'clock in the day. Jessuron and his daughter had just stepped forth into the verandah, and taken their stand by the balustrade looking down into the court. The countenance of both betrayed a certain degree of solicitude, as if they had come out to be witnesses to some spectacle of more than common interest.

The house-wenches and other domestics, trooping behind them with curious looks, showed that some rare scene was to be enacted.

A small iron furnace, filled with live coals, had been placed in the courtyard, near the bottom of the steps. Three or four sullen-looking men—blacks and mulattoes—stood around it in lounging attitudes. One of these stooped over the furnace, turning in the fire what appeared to be a soldering iron, or some other instrument of a brazier.

It was not that, however, as the spectators

well knew. All who beheld it recognized the dreaded *branding iron:* for every one present, the whites and newly-arrived Africans excepted, had, ere now, felt its hot, seething fire in their flesh.

These last had already learnt what was preparing for them; and most of them stood regarding the preparations with looks of silent awe.

Some Coromantees there were among the number, who looked on with reckless indifference, chatting as gaily—and, at intervals, laughing as loudly—as if they awaited the beginning of some merry game. Little cared these courageous sons of Ethiopia—whose sable skins bore scars of many a native fray—little cared they for the scorching of that simple brand.

It was not long before the inhuman spectacle commenced. The entrance of Jessuron and his daughter was the cue to begin; and the bearded overseer, who was master of the ceremonies, had only been waiting till these should make their appearance. The man, from experience, knew that his master always gave his personal superintendence when such a scene was to be enacted. He knew, moreover, that

his master's daughter was equally accustomed to assist at these interesting ceremonies!

"Go on, Mishter Ravener!" cried the Jew, on reaching the front of the verandah. "Theesh first," he added, pointing towards a group of Eboes—who stood trembling with apprehension in one corner of the yard.

At a sign from the overseer, who was one of the taciturn sort, a number of old negroes—evidently used to the business—laid hands upon the Eboes, and led them up to the furnace.

As the victims were brought near to the fire, and saw the red iron glowing amid the coals, fear became strongly depicted upon their faces, and their frames shook with a convulsive terror. Some of them, the younger ones, screamed aloud, and would have rushed away from the spot, had they not been held in the grasp of the attendants.

Their appeals, made by the most pitiful looks and gestures, were answered only by unfeeling jeers and shouts of laughter, in which the old Jew himself joined—in which, incredible to relate, joined his beautiful daughter! Nor was it a mere smile which appeared on the face of the fair Judith; clear laughter rang

from her lips, exhibiting her regular rows of ivory-like teeth—as if some fiend had assumed the form of an angel!

The Eboes were led forward, and held firmly by the assistants, while their breasts were presented to receive the brand. The red-hot iron flashed for a moment in the eyes of each; and then fell with a dull clap upon the clammy skin. Smoke ascended with a hiss, till the court became filled with a smell of roasting flesh! A struggle, some wild cries, and the operation was over. The slave was marked with those indelible initials, to be carried with him to his grave.

One by one, the poor beings received this terrible baptism, and were led away from the ground.

A batch of Pawpaws—from the Whidaw country—came next. They were brought up one by one, like the Eboes; but altogether unlike these was their behaviour. They neither gave way to extreme fear, nor yet displayed extraordinary courage. They appeared to submit with a sort of docile resignation: as though they regarded it in the light of a destiny or duty.

The operation of branding them was a short

work, and afforded no mirth to the bystanders: since there was no ludicrous display of terror to laugh at. This facile disposition renders the Whidaw the most valuable of slaves.

A group of Coromantees were now to undergo the fiery ordeal. These bold and warlike indigenes of Africa evinced, by their attitudes and actions, the possession of a moral nature altogether different from that either of Pawpaw or Eboe. Instead of waiting to be led forward, each stepped boldly up, as he did so baring his breast to receive the red brand, at which he glanced with an air of lordly contempt!

One young fellow even seized the iron from the grasp of the operator; and, turning it in his hand, struck the stamp firmly against his breast, where he held it until the seething flesh told that a deep imprint had been made! Then, flinging the instrument back into the furnace, he strode away from the spot with the air of a triumphant gladiator!

At this moment there occurred a pause in the proceedings—not as if the drama was ended, but only an act. Another was yet to come.

Ravener stepped up to the verandah, in

front of the place where Jessuron and his daughter stood. With the former, or indeed with both, he communicated in a voice just audible,—not as if with any design of concealing what he said—but because there was no necessity for loud talking.

The two man-hunters were the only persons there he might have had any care to be cautious about; but these were at that moment busy with their dogs, and not heeding aught that was going on. Branding a batch of negroes was no new sight to them; and they were spectators, merely from having, at the moment, nothing better to do.

"Which next?" was the question put by Ravener to the Jew; "the Mandingoes?"

"Either them or the prinshe," replied Jessuron; "it don't matter which ish marked first."

"Oh, the prince first, by all means!" suggested the amiable Judith, with a smile of satisfaction. "Bring him out first, Mr. Ravener; I'm curious to see how his royal highness will stand fire."

The overseer made no reply; but, taking the wish of the young lady as a command, proceeded to obey it.

Stepping across the court he opened a door that led into a room, separate from that in which the slaves had been lodged.

The overseer entered the room; and in a few minutes came out again, bringing with him an individual who, by his dress, it might have been difficult to recognize as the young Fellatta seen on board the slaver, but whose noble mien still rendered it possible to identify him: for it was he.

Changed, indeed, was his costume. The turban was gone, the rich silken tunic, the sandals and scimetar—all his finery had been stripped off; and in its place appeared a coarse Osnaburg shirt and trousers—the dress of a plantation negro.

He looked wretched, but not crestfallen.

No doubt he had by this time learnt, or suspected, the fate that was in store for him; but, for all that, his features exhibited the proud air of a prince; and the glances which he cast upon the overseer by his side, but oftener upon Jessuron—whose instrument he knew the other to be—were those of concentrated anger and defiance.

Not a word escaped his lips, either of protest or reproach. This had all passed before—

when the first rude assault had been made upon him, to deprive him of his garments and the adornments of his person. The hour of recrimination was past. He knew he had no alternative but submission, and he was submitting—though in angry and sullen silence.

He had no idea of what was now designed for him. He had been shut up in a windowless room, and saw nothing of the spectacle that had just passed. Some new outrage he anticipated; but of what nature he could not guess.

He was not allowed to remain long in ignorance. Ravener, roughly grasping him by the wrist, led him up to the furnace.

The iron by this time was ready—glowing red-hot among the coals. The operator stood watching for the signal to use it; and on its being given, he seized the instrument in his grasp, and poised it aloft.

The prince now perceived the intention, but shrank not at the sight. His eyes were not upon the iron, but, gleaming with a fire like that of the furnace itself, were directed upon the face of the old Jew—at intervals upon that of the angel-like demon at his side.

The Jew alone shrank from the glance; his

daughter returned it with a mocking imperturbability!

In another instant the red brand hissed as it burnt into the flesh of the Fellatta's bosom. Prince Cingües was the slave of Jacob Jessuron!

As if the terrible reality had now for the first time burst upon him, the young man sprang forward with a cry; and before anyone could oppose his progress, he had bounded up the steps and entered the verandah.

Then, gliding along the gallery, to the spot occupied by Jessuron and his daughter, he launched himself forward upon the Jew. As he clutched the latter by the throat, both came together to the ground, and rolled over and over in the writhings of a desperate struggle.

Fortunate it was for the slave-merchant that his victim had been disarmed: else that moment would have been fatal to him. As it was, he came very near being strangled; and had it not been for Ravener and the two Spaniards, who hastened to his rescue, the betrayal of the Foolah prince would have been the last treason of his life.

Overpowered by numbers, Cingües was at

length secured; and the throat of the slave-merchant was extricated from his death-like clutch.

"Kill him!" cried the Jew, as soon as he found breath to speak. "No, don't kill him yet," added he, correcting himself, "not joosh yet, till I punish him for it! an' if I don't punish him—ach!"

"Flog the savage!" shouted the beautiful Judith; "make an example of him, Mr. Ravener: else those others will be rising upon us in the same style."

"Yesh, flog him! that'll do to begin with. Flog him now, goot Ravener. Give him a hundred lashes thish minute!"

"Ay, ay!" responded the overseer, dragging the victim down the steps; "I'll give him his full dose—never fear you!"

Ravener was as good as his word. The spectacle that followed was even more horrible to behold than that which has been described: for the punishment of the lash is among the most fearful of exhibitions.

The young Foolah was tied to a post—one that stood there for the purpose. A strong *headman* wielded the cruel *quirt;* and as the last stripe was administered, completing that

horrid hundred, the poor victim sank fainting against the blood-stained stake.

The occupants of the verandah showed not the slightest signs of having been moved to pity by this horrid spectacle. On the contrary, both father and daughter seemed to draw delight from it; and, instead of retiring when the fearful scene was over, both, seemingly with perfect unconcern, remained to witness the *finale* of the day's work— the marking of the Mandingoes!

CHAPTER XXII.

A COUCH OF SILK COTTON.

On parting from the presence of his fair cousin, and, at the same time, from the house of his inhospitable relative, Herbert Vaughan struck off through the shrubbery that stretched towards the ridge on the right.

Notwithstanding the storm that was raging in his breast, a reflection had occurred to him, which hindered him from going by the main avenue. Suffering from a keen sense of humiliation, he had no desire to meet with any of his uncle's people: since the very slaves seemed to be privy to his false position. Still less desirous was he of being observed, while making the long traverse of the avenue, by eyes that might be directed upon him from the windows of the great house.

On reaching the limits of the level platform, he leaped a low wall, that separated the shrubbery from the outer fields; and then, under cover of the pimento groves, commenced ascending the slope of the ridge.

For some time the conflicting emotions that were stirring in his soul hindered him from anything like tranquil reflection. Conflicting, I say: for two very opposite sentiments had been aroused by the two individuals with whom he had just held interview; opposite as darkness from light—as sorrow from joy—perhaps, as hate from love.

The conflict might have lasted longer, had there been an opportunity to give way to idle emotions. But there was not. The young man felt too forlorn and friendless to indulge in the luxury of passionate thought; and, on this account, the sooner did the storm subside.

On reaching the crest of the ridge, and before plunging into the deep forest that stretched away on the other side, he endeavoured, through an opening in the trees, to catch a view of those white walls and green jalousies. In that glance there was more of regretfulness than anger—an expression of despair, such as may have appeared on the face of the fallen angel when gazing back over the golden palings of Paradise.

As the young man turned away, and entered under the sombre shadows of the forest, the

expression of despair seemed to become deeper and darker.

To make Montego Bay—to seek in it such humble home as might offer—to wait there till his poorly-stocked portmanteau, now on its way to Mount Welcome, should be returned to him—these were the simple plans that suggested themselves. His mind was still too much on the rack to permit of his dwelling upon any ulterior purpose.

He walked on through the woods, without taking much heed as to the direction in which he was going. Anyone who could have seen him just then might have supposed that he had lost his way, and was wandering.

It was not so, however. He knew or believed that by keeping to the left of his former course he would get out upon the main road, by which he had reached the entrance gate of Mount Welcome. In any case, he could not fail to find the river he had already crossed; and by following it downward, he would in time arrive at the town.

With this confidence, false as it may have been, he was not wandering; only absorbed in thought—in common parlance, absent-minded.

But this absence of mind lasted so long, that it led to the result it resembled: he lost his way in reality.

The trees hindered him from seeing the sun —now low down. But even if a view of the golden orb had been afforded. him, it would have served no purpose: since, on riding out to Mount Welcome, he had taken no note of the relative directions between it and the Bay.

He was not much disconcerted by the discovery that he had lost himself. The reflection that in Montego Bay he would be no better off, hindered him from greatly regretting the circumstance. He had not the means to command the shelter of a roof—even in the midst of a whole city full—and the chances were he might find none better than that which was above him at the moment—the spreading fronds of a gigantic cotton-tree.

At the time that this reflection crossed his mind, the sun had gone quite down: for the cotton-tree stood upon the edge of an opening where he could see the sky above him; and he perceived that it was already tinged with the purple of twilight. To find his way in the darkness would be no longer possible, and he

resolved for that night to accept the hospitality of the *ceiba*.

It had even spread a couch for him: for the seed capsules had burst upon its branches; and the pale-brown staple thickly covered the ground beneath—offering a couch that, under the canopy of a West Indian summer sky, was sufficiently luxuriant.

Was there a supper as well? Herbert looked around—he was hungry. Not a morsel had he eaten since breakfast—only a piece of mess-pork and a brown wormy biscuit, on parting from the ship. Hunger had already made itself felt. During his wanderings, having his gun with him, he had looked out for game. Had any appeared, he was too good a sportsman to have let it escape. But none had shown itself—neither beast nor bird. The woods seemed deserted as himself. He could hear the voices of birds—all strange to his ear—he could see bright-winged creatures fluttering amongst the leaves; but none near enough for the range of his fowling-piece.

Now that he had come to a halt, and having nothing better to do, he took his stand, watching the open glade. Perhaps some bird might

yet show itself passing from tree to tree, or flying about in pursuit of prey. It was the hour for owls. He felt hungry enough to eat one.

Neither owl nor night-jar came in sight; but his attention was attracted to an object edible as either, and which promised to relieve him from the pangs he was suffering.

Close by the cotton-tree stood another giant of the forest—rivalling the former in height, but differing from it as an arrow from its bow. Straight as a lance, it rose to the height of an hundred feet. It was branchless as a column of polished malachite or marble—up to its high summit, where its long green fronds, radiating outward, drooped gracefully over, like a circlet of reflexed ostrich plumes.

A child could have told it to be a palm; but Herbert knew more. He had heard of the noble "mountain-cabbage" of Jamaica—the kingly *areca oredoxia*. He knew that in the centre of that circlet of far-stretching fronds—in that crown—there was a jewel that had often proved more precious than gems or gold: for often had it been the means of saving human life.

How was this jewel to be obtained? Like

all crowns, it was placed high—far above the reach of ordinary mortals. Young and active though he was, and a climber at school, he could never "swarm up" that tall, smooth shaft. Without a ladder a hundred feet in length, it would not be possible to reach its summit.

But, see! the palm-tree stands not alone. A great black liana stretches tortuously from the earth up to the crown, where its head is buried among the tufted leaves, as if it were some huge dragon in the act of devouring its victim.

Herbert stood for a moment reconnoitring the grand stay-cable, that, trailing from the summit of the palm, offered, as it were, a natural ladder for ascending it. Hunger stimulated him to the attempt; and, resting his gun against the trunk of the *ceiba*, he commenced climbing upward.

Without much difficulty, he succeeded in reaching the top, and making his way among the huge *pinnæ* of the leaves—each in itself a leaf of many feet in length. He arrived at the youngest of them all—that still enfolded in the envelope of the bud—and which was the object for which he had climbed.

With his knife he separated this summit

leaf from the stem, flung it to the earth; and then, descending to the bottom of the tree, made his supper upon the raw but sweet and succulent shoots of the mountain-cabbage.

Supper over, he collected a quantity of the strewn fleece of the silk-cotton; and, placing it between two of the great buttress-like root-spurs of the tree, constructed for himself a couch on which, but for some hard thoughts within, he might have slept as softly and soundly as upon a bed of eider.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TREE FOUNTAIN.

THAT he did not sleep soundly may be attributed solely to his anxieties about the morrow: for the night was mild throughout, and the composition of his improvised couch kept him sufficiently warm. His cares, however, had rendered his spirit restless. They were vivid enough to act even upon his dreams—which several times during the night awoke him, and again, finally, just after the break of day.

This time, on opening his eyes, he perceived that the glade was filled with soft blue light; and the quivering fronds of the cabbage-palm —just visible from where he lay—had caught the first trembling rays of the sun.

Only there, and among the summit-branches of the *ceiba*, far overtopping the *spray* of the surrounding forest, was the sun yet visible. Everything else was tinted with the blue grey of the morning twilight.

He could sleep no longer; and rose from his forest lair, intending to make an immediate departure from the spot.

He had no toilet to trouble him—nothing to do, further than brush off the silken floss of the tree-cotton, shoulder his gun, and go.

He felt hunger, even more than on the preceding night; and, although the raw mountain-cabbage offered no very tempting *déjeúner*, he determined before starting, to make another meal upon it—remembering, and very wisely acting upon, the adage of "a bird in the hand."

There was plenty left from the supper to serve him for breakfast; and, once more making a vigorous onslaught on the *chou de palmiste*, he succeeded in appeasing his hunger.

But another appetite, far more unpleasant to bear, now assailed him. In truth, it had assailed him long before, but had been gradually growing stronger; until it was now almost unendurable.

It was the kindred appetite, thirst; which the cabbage-palm, instead of relieving, had, from a certain acridity in its juice, only sharpened—till the pain amounted almost to torture.

The sufferer would have struck off into the woods in search of water. He had seen none in his wanderings; still he had hopes of being able to find the river. He would have started at once, but for an idea he had conceived that there was water near the spot where he had slept.

Where? He had observed neither stream nor spring, pond nor river; and yet he fancied he had seen water—in fact, he felt sure of it!

In a very singular situation he had seen it—so thought he at the time—since it was over his head in the cotton-tree!

On the previous evening, while upon the crown of the cabbage-palm, he had glanced slantingly across, among the branches of the *ceiba*. This, as with all great trees in the tropical forests, was loaded with parasites—*vriesias*, long ragged-looking cacti, bromelias, epiphytical orchids, and the like. *Tillandsias* too, of the kind known as "wild pines," grew in the forks, or on the upper surface of the great limbs, flourishing as luxuriantly as if their roots rested in the richest soil. Among them was conspicuous the most magnificent of the genus, the noble *Tillandsia lingulata*, with its spike of gorgeous crimson flowers projecting

from the midst of its broad sheathing leaves. It was in the concavities of these huge leaves that Herbert had observed something which did not belong to the plant—something he believed to be *water*.

It would cost but a few seconds' time to confirm or refute this belief—a climb among the branches of the *ceiba*. Another huge parasite, from the same root as the former, trended tortuously up to the limbs of the silk-cotton-tree—here and there touching and twisting around them. Its diagonal direction rendered it easy of ascent; and Herbert, impelled by his desire to drink, commenced climbing it.

Ere long, he had succeeeded in reaching a main fork of the *ceiba*, where nestled one of the largest of the wild pines.

He had not been deceived. In a hollow formed by one of its huge ventricose leaves was the natural reservoir he had noticed—the gathering of dew and rain, which the rays of the sun could never reach.

At his approach, the green *hyla* sprang out from this aërial pool; and leaping, frog-like, from leaf to leaf—guarded against falling by the clammy sponge-disks of its feet—soon dis-

appeared amid the foliage. It was this singular creature whose voice Herbert had been hearing throughout the livelong night; and which, in constant chorus with others of its kind, had recalled to his memory the groaning and working of the *Sea Nymph* in a storm.

The presence of the tree-toad in this its natural haunt, did not deter the young man from drinking. Raging thirst has no scruples; and, bending over one of the leaves of the *tillandsia*, he placed his lips to the cool water, and freely quaffed it.

The labour of scrambling up the *lliana* had taken away his breath, and to some extent fatigued him. Instead, therefore, of descending at once—which he knew would cost him an effort equal to that of the ascent—he determined to rest for a few minutes upon the large limb of the *ceiba* on which he had seated himself.

"Well!" muttered he, in satisfied soliloquy, "if the people of this island have proved inhospitable, I can't say the same of its trees. Here are two of them—almost the first I have encountered. They have yielded me the three necessaries of life—meat, drink, and lodging—lodging, too, with an excellent bed, a thing

not so common in many a human hostelry. What more is wanted? Under such a sky as this, who need care to have walls around, or a roof over him? Verily, to sleep here, *sub Jove*, is rather a luxury than an inconvenience! And, verily," continued he, "were it not that I should feel rather lonely, and that man is designed to be a social animal, I might pass my whole life in these glorious woods, without work or care of any kind. No doubt there is game; and I was told at home there are no game laws—so I might poach at pleasure. Ha! game? What do I see? A deer? No! a hog! Yes, hog it is; but such a singular fellow—prick ears, red bristles, long legs, and tusks. A boar! and why not a wild boar?"

There was no reason why it should not be, since it *was* one—a wild boar of the Jamaica forest— a true descendant of the Canarian hog, transported thither by the Spaniards.

The young Englishman, never having seen a wild boar in its native haunts, put the question conjecturally; but a moment's observation of the animal convinced him that his conjecture was correct. The short upright ears, the long head, hams, and legs, the shaggy neck and frontlet, the foxy red colour, the quick

short step as it moved onward—all these *points*, combined with a certain savage air which Herbert noticed at a glance, satisfied him that the animal under his eyes was not one of the domestic breed, but a genuine wild hog of the woods. The grunt, too, which the creature uttered as it moved across the glade—short, sharp and fierce—had but slight resemblance to the squeaking sounds of the farm-yard. A wild boar beyond a doubt!

On perceiving this noble head of game, and so near him, Herbert's first reflection was one of extreme regret. How unlucky that he should be up in the tree, with his gun upon the ground!

It was very tantalizing; but the young man saw it would be impossible to get possession of his gun without giving the alarm. To attempt descending from the tree, or even make a movement upon the branch, would be sufficient to send the boar scampering from the spot: of course never to be seen more.

Conscious of this, Herbert preferred remaining upon his perch—the silent spectator of a scene of wild Nature, to which chance had so oddly introduced him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOG-HUNTER.

THE boar had stopped over the *débris* of Herbert's breakfast—some fragments of the mountain cabbage which had been left upon the ground. Switching his feathered tail, and uttering a short grunt, expressive of satisfaction, the animal proceeded to snap up the scattered pieces, crunching them between his formidable grinders.

All of a sudden, the tranquil tableau became transformed into a scene of a more exciting nature. As Herbert continued to gaze, he saw the boar suddenly make a start, jerk his muzzle high in the air, at the same instant uttering a peculiar cry. It was a cry of alarm, mingled with angry menace—as testified by the bristles upon his back, which had suddenly shot up into an erect spinous mane.

Herbert looked for the enemy. None was in sight—at least to his eyes. The boar, however, had either seen or heard something: for

he was evidently upon the strain to spring off.

Just then, a loud report reverberated through the glade, a bullet hissed through the air, and the animal, with a shrill scream, turned over upon its back, the blood spouting from a wound in its thigh.

In an instant it was on its feet again; but rage appeared to hinder it from attempting flight! It retreated only a few paces, taking its stand between two of the buttresses of the *ceiba*—on the very spot where the young Englishman had passed the night. There—protected on both flanks and in the rear—and uttering fierce grunts of defiance—it stood, as if awaiting an enemy.

Soon after a man emerged from the underwood, armed with what appeared to be a straight sword or cutlass.

In a dozen quick strides he crossed the glade; and, having reached the roots of the cotton tree, became engaged in a deadly struggle with the wounded boar.

Notwithstanding the damage done to it, the creature was still a formidable antagonist; and it required all the address of the hunter—habile

though he appeared to be—to avoid contact with his terrible tusks.

Each alternatively charged upon the other—the hunter endeavouring to thrust the quadruped with his long blade, while the boar in its turn would repeatedly rush towards its antagonist, suddenly rear itself upon its hind legs, and strike upwards with its armed and grinning muzzle.

It was one of the fore-legs of the animal that had been broken by the shot; but the wound, although greatly disabling it, did not hinder it from making a protracted and desperate defence. The spurs of the cotton-tree rising on each side proved its best protectors—hindering its assailant from turning its flanks and piercing it in the side. The combat, therefore, was face to face; and the blade of the hunter, repeatedly thrust forward, as often glanced harmlessly from the hard skull, or glinted with a metallic ring against the tusks of the boar.

For several minutes did this singular contest continue—the young Englishman all the while watching it with lively interest; but without giving the slightest signs of his being a spectator. Indeed, the scene was so ex-

citing, and had come under his eyes so unexpectedly, that he was for a time held speechless by sheer surprise.

After a while the struggle between biped and quadruped was brought to a termination. The former—who appeared to possess all the craft of his calling—put in practice a *ruse* that enabled him to give his antagonist the *coup de grace*.

It was a feat, however, accompanied by no slight danger; and so adroitly did the hunter perform it, as to create within the mind of his spectator—himself a sportsman—both surprise and admiration.

Thus was the feat accomplished. In charging forward upon his human adversary, the boar had incautiously ventured beyond the flanking buttresses of the tree. In fact, the hunter had enticed the animal outward—by making a feint of retreating from the contest.

Just then—and before the brute could divine his intention—the hunter rushed forward, and, throwing all his strength into the effort, sprang high into the air. Quite clearing the quadruped, he alighted in the angle formed by the converging spurs of the tree.

The boar had now lost his position of defence; though that of the hunter for the moment appeared desperate. He had calculated his chances, however: for before the enraged animal—hindered by its hanging limb—could face round to assail him, he had lunged out with his long blade, and buried it up to the hilt between the creature's ribs.

With a shrill scream the boar fell prostrate to the earth—the red stream from his side spurting over and spoiling the improvised mattress of cotton-tree flock upon which the young Englishman had passed the night.

Up to this moment the latter had done nothing, either by word or gesture, to make known his presence. He was about to descend and congratulate the hunter for the performance of a feat that had filled him with admiration. A fancy, passing through his mind at the moment, determined him to remain where he was a little longer; and, in obedience to this fancy, he sat gazing down upon the successful sportsman at the bottom of the tree.

To say the least, the appearance presented by this individual was singular—especially so in the eyes of an Englishman unacquainted with

West Indian characters and costumes. But, in addition to picturesqueness of attire, there was something in the carriage and features of the man that could not fail to make a remarkable impression upon the beholder.

This impression was decidedly pleasing; though the face that produced it was not that of a *white* man. Neither was it the face of a black man; nor yet the yellow countenance of the mulatto. It was a shade lighter than the last, with a dash of crimson in the cheeks. It was this colouring of the cheeks, perhaps, combined with a well-rounded, sparkling iris, that imparted the agreeable expression.

The man was young. Herbert Vaughan might have guessed him about his own age without being many months astray; and, in point of size and shape, there was no great dissimilitude between them. In the colour of their hair, complexion, and features, there was no resemblance whatever. While the face of the young Englishman was of the oval type, that of the West Indian hunter was rotund. A prominent, well-cut chin, however, hindered it from degenerating into any expression of feebleness. On the contrary, firmness was the prevailing cast of the fea-

tures; and the bold, swelling throat was a true physical index of daring.

The complexion of the hunter betokened a *sang-mêlé* between African and Caucasian, which was further confirmed by the slight crisping that appeared among the jet black curls of hair thickly covering his head. The luxuriance of these curls was partly kept in check by a head-dress that Herbert Vaughan would have been less surprised to see in some country of the East: for, at the first glance, he had mistaken it for a turban. On closer examination, however, it proved to be a brilliant kerchief—the Madras check—ingeniously folded around the forehead, so as to sit coquettishly over the crown, with the knot a little to one side. It was a *toque*—not a turban.

The other articles of dress worn by the young hunter were an outer coat, or shirt, of sky-blue cottonade, cut somewhat blouse-fashion; an under-shirt of fine white linen, ruffled and open at the breast; trousers of the same material as the coat; and buff coloured boots of roughly-cleaned cowskin. There were straps and strings over both shoulders, all crossing each other on the breast.

From the two that hung to the right side

were suspended a powder-horn and skin shot-pouch. On the same side hung a large calabash canteen, covered with a strong net-work of some forest withe to protect it from injury. Under the left arm was a carved and curving cow's horn, evidently not for holding powder, since it was open at both ends. Below this, against his hip, rested a black leathern sheath—the receptacle of that long blade still reeking with the blood of the boar.

This weapon was the *machete*—half sword, half hunting-knife—which, with its straight, short blade, and haft-like hilt of greyish horn, is to be found in every cottage of Spanish America, from California to the "Land of Fire." Even where the Spaniards have been, but *are* no longer—as in Jamaica—the universal *machete* may be seen in the hands of hunter and peasant—a relic of the conqueror colonists.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RUNAWAY.

Up to the moment that the boar was laid prostrate upon the ground, he in the *toque* had been kept too well employed with his fierce game to find time for looking at anything else. It was only after dealing the death-blow to his adversary that he was able to stand erect and take a survey around him.

In an instant his eye fell upon the gun of the young Englishman, and then the white pieces of palm-cabbage upon which the boar had been browsing.

"Hoh!" exclaimed he, still gasping for breath, but with a look that betrayed surprise; "A gun! Whose? Some runaway slave who has stolen his master's fowling-piece? Nothing more likely. But why has he left the piece behind him? And what has started him away from here? Surely not the boar? He must have been gone before the animal got up? *Crambo!* a richer prize than the porker,

if I could only have set eyes on him! I wonder in which direction he has tracked it? Hish! what do I see? The runaway! yes—yes, it is he! Coming back for his gun? *Crambo!* This is unexpected luck, so early in the morning—a slave capture—a *bounty!*"

As the hunter hurriedly muttered these concluding phrases, he glided with stealthy tread between the two buttresses; and, having placed himself in the extreme angle of their convergence, remained perfectly still—as if to await the approach of some one who was advancing towards the tree.

Herbert, from his perch, had a full view of the new comer thus announced.

A young man of a copper red colour, with straight black hair, shaggily tossed and pulled over his forehead, as if some one had been tearing it from his head! His face, too—a fine one, notwithstanding its mahogany colour—appeared freshly lacerated; and his whole body bore the marks of inhuman abuse. The coarse cotton shirt that covered his shoulders was blotched with blood; and long, crimson-coloured stripes running across his back, looked like the imprints of an ensanguined lash!

The attitude in which he was advancing was as peculiar as his costume. When Herbert first set eyes on him he was *crawling* upon his hands and knees, yet going with considerable speed. This led to the belief that his bent position was assumed rather with a view towards concealment, than from the inability to walk erect.

This belief was soon after confirmed: for on entering the glade the young man rose to his feet, and trotted on—but still with body bent—towards the *ceiba*.

What could he want there?

Was he making for the huge tree as a haven of safety from some deadly pursuers? Herbert fancied so.

The hunter believed he was coming back for his gun—having no suspicion that the real owner of the piece was just over his head.

Both remained silent; though from motives having no similitude to each other.

In a few seconds' time, the fugitive—for his actions proved him one—had reached the bottom of the tree.

"Halt!" cried the hunter, showing himself round the buttress, and stepping in front of

the new comer. "You are a runaway, and my prisoner!"

The fugitive dropped upon his knees, crossed his arms over his breast, and uttered some phrases in an unknown tongue — amongst which Herbert could distinguish the word "Allah."

His captor appeared equally at fault about the meaning of the words; but neither the attitude of the speaker, nor the expression upon his countenance, could be mistaken: it was an appeal for mercy.

"*Crambo!*" exclaimed the hunter, bending forward, and gazing for a moment at the breast of the runaway—on which the letters "J. J." were conspicuously branded—"with that tattoo on your skin, I don't wonder you've given leg-bail to your master. Poor devil! they've tattooed you still more brutally upon the back."

As he said this—speaking rather to himself than to the wretched creature that knelt before him—the hunter stretched forth his hand, raised the shirt from the shoulders of the runaway, and gazed for a while upon his naked back. The skin was covered with purple

wales, crossing each other like the arteries in an anatomic plate!

"God of the Christian!" exclaimed the yellow hunter, with evident indignation at the sight, "if this be your decree, then give me the fetish of my African ancestors. But no," added he, after a pause, "J. J. is *not* a Christian—he cares for no God."

The soliloquy of the hunter was here interrupted by a second speech from the suppliant, spoken in the same unknown tongue.

This time the gesture signified that it was an appeal for protection against some enemy in the rear: for the sympathetic looks of his captor had evidently won the confidence of the fugitive.

"They are after you—no doubt of it," said the hunter. "Well, let them come—whoever are your pursuers. This time they have lost their chance; and the bounty is mine, not theirs. Poor devil! it goes against my grain to deliver you up; and were it not for the law that binds me, I should scorn their paltry reward. Hark! yonder they come! Dogs, as I'm a man! Yes, it's the bay of a bloodhound! Those villanous man-hunters of Batabano—I knew old Jessuron had them in his pay.

Here, my poor fellow, in here!" and the hunter half-led, half-dragged the fugitive over the carcass of the wild boar, placing him between the buttresses of the *ceiba*. "Stand close in to the angle," he continued. "Leave me to guard the front. Here's your gun; I see it's loaded. I hope you know how to use it? Don't fire till you're sure of hitting! We'll need both blade and shot to save ourselves from these Spanish dogs, that will make no distinction between you and me. Not they! *Crambo!* there they come!"

The words had scarce issued from the speaker's lips, when two large dogs broke, with a swishing noise, out of the bushes on the opposite side of the glade—evidently running on the trail of the fugitive.

The crimson colour of their muzzles showed that they had been baited with blood—which, darkening as it dried, rendered more conspicuous the white fang-like teeth within their jaws.

They were half-hound, half-mastiff; but ran as true-bred hounds on a fresh trail.

No trail could have been fresher than that of the flogged fugitive; and, in a few seconds after entering the glade, the hounds had got

up to the *ceiba*, in front of the triangular chamber in which stood the runaway and his protector.

These dogs have no instinct of self-preservation—only an instinct to discover and destroy. Without stopping to bark or bay—without even slackening their pace — both dashed onward, bounding into the air as they launched themselves upon the supposed objects of their pursuit.

The first only impaled himself upon the outstretched *machete* of the yellow hunter; and as the animal came down to the earth, it was to utter the last howl of his existence.

The other, springing towards the naked fugitive, received the contents of the fowling-piece, and, like the first, rolled lifeless upon the earth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A COMBAT DECLINED.

THE spectator in the tree began to fancy that he was dreaming. Within the short space of twenty minutes he had been the witness of a greater number of exciting events than he might have seen, in his own land, during the same number of years!

And yet he had not witnessed the *finale* of the drama. The gestures of the runaway, and the speeches of his captor, had already warned him that there was another act to come; and, from the attitudes of both, it was evident that this act would be performed on the same stage, without any change of scene.

As yet the young Englishman saw no particular reason why he should cease to be a spectator, and become an actor, in this West Indian drama. That the yellow hunter should kill a wild boar, capture a runaway slave, and afterwards shield both his captive and himself from a brace of bloodhounds, by killing the

fierce brutes, was no affair of his. The only thing that concerned him was the uncere-monious use that had been made of his fowl-ing-piece; but it is scarce necessary to say that Herbert Vaughan, had he been asked, would have freely lent the piece for such a purpose.

Nothing, however, had yet transpired to tempt him from a strict neutrality; and, until something should, he determined to preserve the passive attitude he had hitherto held.

Scarce had he come to this determination, when three new actors appeared upon the scene.

One, the foremost, and apparently the leader, was a tall, black-bearded man in a red plush waistcoat, and high-topped horse-skin boots. The other two were lean, lithe-looking fellows in striped shirt and trousers, each wearing broad-brimmed palm-leaf hats that shadowed their sharp Spanish physiognomies.

The bearded man was armed with gun and pistols. The others appeared to be without firearms of any kind; but each carried in his hand a long rapier-like blade, the sheath of which hung dangling from his hip. It was the *machete*—the same kind of weapon as that

which the yellow hunter had but the moment before so skilfully wielded.

On perceiving the tableau under the tree, the three new comers halted—and with no slight surprise depicted in their looks. The men of Spanish face appeared more especially astonished—indignation mingling with their surprise—when they beheld in that grouping of figures the bodies of their own bloodhounds stretched dead upon the sward!

The bearded man, who, as we have said, appeared to be the leader, was the first to give speech to the sentiment that animated all three.

"What game's this?" he cried, his face turning purple with rage. "Who are you that has dared to interfere with our pursuit?"

"*Carajo!* he's killed our dogs?" vociferated one of the Spaniards.

"*Demonios!* you'll pay for this with your lives!" added the other, raising his *machete* in menace.

"And what if I have killed your dogs?" rejoined the yellow hunter, with an air of *sang froid*, which won the silent applause of the spectator. "What if I have? If I had not killed *them*, they would have killed *me*."

"No," said one of the Spaniards; "they would not have touched you. *Carrambo!* they were too well trained for that—they were after *him.* Why did you put yourself in the way to protect him? It's no business of yours."

"There, my worthy friend, you are mistaken," replied he in the *toque,* with a significant sneer. "It *is* my business to protect him—my *interest* too: since he is my captive."

"*Your* captive!" exclaimed one of the men, with a glance of concern.

"Certainly, he is my captive; and it was my interest not to let the dogs destroy him. Dead, I should only have got two pounds currency for his head. Living, he is worth twice that, and mileage money to boot; though I'm sorry to see by the 'J. J.' on his breast that the mileage money won't amount to much. Now, what more have you to say, my worthy gentlemen?"

"Only this," cried the man with the black beard; "that we listen to no such nonsense as that there. Whoever you may be, I don't care. I suspect who you are; but that don't hinder me from telling you, you've no business to meddle in this affair. This runaway slave belongs to Jacob Jessuron. I'm his overseer.

He's been taken on Jessuron's own ground: therefore you can't claim the captive, nor yet the bounty. So you'll have to give him up to *us*."

"*Carrambo, si!*" vociferated both the Spaniards in a breath, at the same time that the three advanced towards the runaway—the bearded overseer pistol in hand, and his two comrades with their *machetes* drawn, and ready to be used.

"Come on, then!" cried the hunter, in a taunting tone—as he spoke making signs to the runaway to stand to his defence. "Come on! but, remember! the first that lays hand upon him is a dead man. There are three of you, and we are but two—one already half-dead with your inhuman cruelty."

"Three against two! that's not a fair fight!" cried the young Englishman, dropping down from the tree, and ranging himself on the weaker side. "Perhaps it'll be a better match now," added he, taking a pistol from under the breast of his coat, and cocking it as he did so—evidently with the intention of using it, should the affair be carried further.

"And who are you, sir?" demanded the overseer, with as much arrogance as he could throw into his manner. "Who, sir, may I

inquire, is the white man who thus places himself in opposition to the laws of the island? You know the penalty, sir; and by *my* word, you shall pay it!"

"If I have committed a breach of the laws," replied Herbert, "I presume I shall have to answer for it. But I have yet to learn what law I have broken; and I don't choose that you shall be my judge."

"You are aiding in the escape of a slave!"

"That's not true," interrupted the yellow hunter. "The slave is already captured; he could not have escaped; and this young gentleman—who is as much a stranger to me as to you—I am sure, had no intention of assisting him to escape."

"Bah!" exclaimed the overseer; "we care not for your talk—we deny your right to capture him; and you had no business to interfere. We had already tracked him down with the dogs; and should have had him without any help from you. He is *our* prize, therefore; and I again demand of you to give him up!"

"Indeed!" sneeringly responded the yellow hunter.

"I make the demand," continued the other, without noticing the sneer, "in the name of Jacob Jessuron—whose overseer I've told you I am."

"Perhaps, were you Jacob Jessuron himself, I might resist your demand," rejoined the hunter, coolly, and without any appearance of braggadocio.

"You refuse to surrender him, then?" said the overseer, as if making his final overture.

"I do," was the firm reply.

"Enough—you shall repent this; and you, sir," continued the deputy of Jessuron, turning a fierce look upon Herbert, "you shall answer before a magistrate for the part it has pleased you to play in this transaction. A pretty white man you for the island of Jamaica! A few more of your sort, and we'd have a nice time with our niggers. Don't fear, mister; you'll see me again."

"I have no particular desire," rejoined Herbert; "for, certainly," continued he, with provoking jocularity, "an uglier-looking face than yours I have never set eyes upon; and it could be no pleasure to me to look upon it again."

"Confusion!" cried the overseer. "You'll

repent that insult before you're a month older —curse me if you don't!"

And with this characteristic menace, the ruffian turned and walked sullenly away.

"*Caspita!*" cried one of the Spaniards, as the two hastened to follow their leader. "My brave dogs! Ah, *demonio!* you shall pay dearly for them. Two hundred *pesos* each—not a *cuartito* less!"

"Not a *cuartito* for either!" responded the yellow hunter, with a mocking laugh. "Haven't I proved that they are not worth it? With all your boasting of what your bloodhounds could do, look at them now. *Vaya!* my fine fellows! Go back to your own country, and hunt runaway negroes there. Here you must leave that game to those who know how to manage it—*the Maroons!*"

Herbert observed that the hunter, on pronouncing these last words, drew himself up with an air of majestic pride—as he did so, glancing scornfully towards the crestfallen *caçadores*.

An angry "*Carrai!*" simultaneously hissed from the lips of both, was the only reply made by the two Spaniards; who, at the same instant, turned their backs upon the *ceiba*, and followed their leader across the glade.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MAROONS.

As soon as they were gone out of sight, the hunter turned towards Herbert, his eyes sparkling with gratitude.

"Master!" said he, making a low obeisance as he spoke, "after that, words are but a poor way of offering thanks. If the brave white gentleman who has risked his life for a coloured outcast will let me know his name, it will not be forgotten by *Cubina, the Maroon.*"

"Cubina, the Maroon!"

Struck by the oddness of the name and title—as he had already been by the appearance and behaviour of him who bore them—Herbert repeated the phrase mechanically, rather than otherwise.

"Yes, that is my name, master."

The young Englishman, though not yet enlightened as to the odd appellation, was too well-bred to press for an explanation.

"Pardon me," said he, "for not directly replying to your request. I am an Englishman; my name Vaughan—Herbert Vaughan."

"By that name, master, I take it you have relatives in the island. The owner of Mount Welcome estate——"

"Is my uncle."

"Ah! then, sir, anything a poor Maroon hunter could do for you would not be much. All the same, you have my thanks; and if ——; but, master," continued the speaker, suddenly changing his tone, as if in obedience to some instinct of curiosity, "may I make bold to ask why you are afoot so early? The sun is not yet ten minutes above the trees, and Mount Welcome is three miles distant. You must have tracked it here in the dark —no easy matter, through these tangled woods?"

"I passed the night here," replied the Englishman, smiling; "that was *my* bed, where the boar is now sleeping."

"Then the gun is yours, not his?"

The hunter nodded interrogatively towards the runaway, who, standing some paces off, was regarding both the speakers with glances of gratitude, not, however, unmingled with some signs of uneasiness.

"Yes, it is my gun. I am very glad the piece was not empty: since it enabled him to

destroy the fierce brute that would otherwise have had him by the throat. Wretched as the poor fellow appears, he handled his weapon well. What is he, and what have they been doing to him?"

"Ah, Master Vaughan; by those two questions, it is easy to tell you are a stranger to the island. I think I can answer both—though I never saw the young man before. Poor wretch! The answers are written out upon his skin, in letters that don't require much scholarship to read. Those upon his breast tell that he's a slave—the slave of J. J. : Jacob Jessuron. You'll excuse me from giving my opinion of *him*."

"What have they done to you, my poor fellow?" asked Herbert of the runaway—his compassion hindering him from waiting for the more roundabout explanation of the Maroon.

The blood-bedaubed creature, perceiving that the speech was addressed to him, made a long rejoinder; but in a tongue unknown both to the hunter and Herbert. The latter could distinguish two words that he had heard before—"Foolah" and "Allah"—both of which occurred repeatedly in the speech.

"It's no use asking him, Master Vaughan. Like yourself, he's a stranger to the island; though, as you see, they've already initiated him into some of its ways. Those brands upon his breast are nearly fresh—as you may tell by the red skin around the letters. He's just been landed from Africa, it appears. As for the marks upon his back—those have been made by a plaything, the white planters and their overseers in these parts are rather too fond of using—the cartwhip! They've been flogging the poor devil; and, *Crambo!* they've given it to him thick and sharp."

As the Maroon made this remark, he raised the blood-stained shirt, exposing to view that back so terribly reticulated. The sight was sickening. Herbert could not bear to gaze upon it; but averted his eyes on the instant.

"From Africa, you say? He has not got negro features!"

"As to his features, that don't signify. There are many African tribes who are not negro-featured. I can tell from his that he is a Foolah. I hear him use the word as he talks."

"Yoy—Foolah! Foolah!" cried the runaway on hearing pronounced the name of his

people; and then he continued in a strain of the same language, accompanied by much gesticulation.

"I wish I knew his lingo," said the hunter. "I know he's a Foolah. It is some reason why I should take an interest in him; and may be, if only for that, I might——"

The speaker paused, as if he had been talking to himself; and then continued the soliloquy only in thought. After a pause he resumed speech.

"*Crambo!* very little would tempt me *not* to restore him to his master."

"And must you?"

"I must. We Maroons are bound by a treaty to deliver up all runaways we may take; and if we fail to do so—that is, *when it is known;* but these villains of old Jessuron know I have him——"

"You will receive a bounty, you say?"

"Yes. They will try to deprive me of that; but it isn't the bounty would tempt me in this case. There is something about this young fellow.—My word! he *is* like her! —ay; as if he were her brother."

This last speech was delivered in soliloquy.

"Like her! Like whom?" demanded Herbert with a puzzled look.

"Your pardon," replied the hunter. "I was struck with a resemblance between this poor fellow and one whom I know; but, Master Vaughan," he continued, as if wishing to change the subject, "you have not said how you came to be all night in the woods? You were hunting yesterday and lost your way?"

"True, I lost my way, but not exactly while hunting."

"Perhaps that is all the sort of breakfast you have had?" and the Maroon pointed to some pieces of the palm cabbage that still lay on the turf.

"I have both supped and breakfasted upon it," replied Herbert. "I had climbed the tree for water, when the boar came up to break his fast upon what remained of it."

The Maroon smiled at this explanation of some circumstances by which even he had been mystified.

"Well," said he, "if you are not anxious to return at once to Mount Welcome, and will give me five minutes' time, I think I can provide you something better than raw cabbage."

"I am not particularly in a hurry about getting back to Mount Welcome. Perhaps I may never go back!"

These words, combined with the air of the young Englishman as he uttered them, did not escape the notice of the intelligent Maroon.

"Something strange in this young man's history!" said he to himself, though he had the delicacy not to demand an explanation of the ambiguous speech just made. "Well, it's not my affair, I suppose!"

Then, addressing himself to Herbert, he said aloud—

"Do you agree, Master Vaughan, to eat a forest breakfast of my providing?"

"Indeed, with pleasure," answered Herbert.

"Then I must ring for my servants."

As he said this, the hunter raised his curved horn to his lips and blew a long, tremulous blast.

"That should procure us company and something to eat, master," said he, allowing the horn to drop back to its place.

"Hark!" he continued, the instant after, "there are some of my fellows. I thought they could not be far off."

As he spoke the sound of a horn was heard reverberating through the woods; and then another, and another—until nearly a dozen could be distinguished, yet all in different directions. They were evidently answers to the signal he had sounded.

"So, Master Vaughan," he resumed, with an air expressive of triumph, though in a restrained and modest way, "you see these vultures would not have had it all their own way? My hawks were too near for that. Not the less am I beholden to you, Master Vaughan. I did not think it worth while to call my people. I knew the poltroons would not venture beyond a little swaggering talk. See! they come!"

"Who?"

"The Maroons!"

Herbert heard a rustling among the bushes on the opposite side of the glade; and, at the same time, about a dozen armed men emerged from the underwood, and advanced rapidly towards the *ceiba*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A FOREST BREAKFAST.

THE young Englishman gazed upon the advancing troop with keen curiosity. There were about a dozen of them, all black men, or nearly all—only one or two of them showing any admixture of colour. There was not a dwarfish or deformed figure in the party. On the contrary, every man of them possessed a tall stalwart form, strong muscular limbs, a skin shining with health, and eyes sparkling with a vigorous brilliance that betokened an innate sense of freedom and independence.

Their erect, upright carriage and free, forward step confirmed the belief, which Herbert had already formed, that these black men were not *bondsmen*. There was nothing of the slave either in their looks or gestures. But for the colour of their skins, he would never have thought of associating such men with the idea of slavery. Armed as they were with long knives and guns, some of them with stout

spears, they could not be slaves. Besides, their equipments told that they were hunters—and warriors, if need be. All of them had horns, with pouches suspended over their shoulders; and each was provided with a netted calabash for water, like that of the yellow hunter, already described.

A few carried an equipment altogether different—consisting of a small pannier of withework, or palm-fibre neatly woven. It rested upon the back, where it was held in place by a band of palm sinnet, crossing the breast, and another brought over the forehead, which thus sustained a portion of the weight. This pannier was the *cutacoo*—the depository of their provisions, and of such articles as were required in their wild forest rambles.

With regard to their costume, that was *bizarre*, though not unpicturesque. No two were dressed alike, though there was a certain idiosyncrasy in their attire, which proclaimed them all of one following. The *toqued* "bandanna" was the most common head-dress—a few having palm-leaf hats. Only some of them had a shirt with sleeves; others wanted a complete pair of trousers; and one or two were naked from the waist upward, and

from the thighs downwards—the white cotton loin-cloth being the unique and only garment! All of them had their feet and ankles covered: as the stony and thorny paths they were accustomed to tread rendered necessary. The *chaüssure* was the same with all; and appeared to be a tight-fitting jack-boot, of some species of raw hide, without seam or stitching of any kind. The reddish bristles standing thinly over its surface, proclaimed the character of the material. It was the skin of the wild hog: the hind leg of a boar, drawn upon the foot while fresh and warm, as it dries tightening over the instep and ankle like an elastic stocking. A little trimming with the knife is all that is necessary for this ready-made mocassin; and once on, it is never taken off till the wearing of the sole renders necessary a refit. Drawing on his boots, therefore, is no part of the diurnal duties of a Jamaica hog-hunter.

I have said that Herbert Vaughan regarded the new comers with a feeling of curiosity as well as surprise. It was no wonder he did so. The mode in which they had been summoned into his presence, their echo-like answers to the horn signal, and their

prompt, almost instantaneous appearance, formed a series of incidents that more resembled what might have been witnessed upon the stage of a theatre than in real life; and had the yellow hunter been a white man, and he and his followers clad in Lincoln green, the young Englishman might have fancied himself in Sherwood Forest, with bold Robin *redivivus*, and his merry men mustering around him!

"This white gentleman has not eaten breakfast," said Cubina to his followers as they came up. "Well, Quaco! what have you got in your cutacoos?"

The individual thus appealed to was a jet black negro of large dimensions, with a grave yet quizzical cast of countenance. He appeared to be a sort of lieutenant: perhaps the "Little John" of the party.

"Well, worthy capten," answered he, saluting the yellow hunter with a somewhat awkward grace; "I believe there's enough, one thing with another—that be, if the gen'lman has got a good appetite, and 's not too nice about what he eats."

"What is there? Let me see!" interrupted Cubina, as he proceeded to inspect the pan-

niers. "A ham of wild hog barbecued," continued he, turning out the contents of a cutacoo. "Well, that to begin with—the white gentry are rather partial to our barbecued hog! What else? a brace of soldier-crabs. So far good. Ah! better still, a pair of ramier pigeons, and a wild guinea-fowl. Who carries the coffee and sugar?"

"Here, captain," cried another of the cutacoo men, throwing his pannier to the ground, and drawing out several bags which contained the necessary materials for coffee-making.

"A fire, and be quick!" commanded Cubina.

At the word given a tinder was struck, dry leaves and branches quickly collected, and a sparkling, crackling fire soon blazed upon the ground. Over this was erected a crane—resting horizontally on two forked sticks—which soon carried a brace of iron pots suspended in the blaze.

With so many cooks, the process of preparing the meat for the pots was very short and quick. The pigeons and guinea-fowl were singed as fast as feathers would burn; and then being "drawn and quartered," were flung in torn fragments into the largest of the pots.

The soldier-crabs shared the same fate; and

some pieces of the wild hog ham. A handful of salt was added, water, a few slices of plantain, eddoes, calalue, and red capsicum—all of which ingredients were supplied from the cutacoos.

A strong fire of dried faggots soon brought the pot to a furious boil; and the lieutenant Quaco—who appeared also to act as *chef de cuisine*—after repeatedly testing the contents, at length declared that the *pepper-pot* was ready for serving up.

Dishes, bowls, cups, and platters made their appearance—all being shells of the calabash, of different shapes; and as soon as Herbert and the captain were helped to the choicest portions of the savoury stew, the remainder was distributed among the men: who, seating themselves in groups over the ground, proceeded to discuss the well-known viand with an avidity that showed it was also their breakfast.

The *pepper-pot* was not the sole dish of the *déjeúner*. Pork steaks, cut from the carcass of the freshly-slain boar, were added; while plantains and "cocoa-fingers," roasted in the ashes, contributed a substitute for bread not to be despisingly spoken of.

The second pot boiling over the fire contained the coffee; which, quaffed from the calabashes, tasted as fine as if sipped out of cups of the purest Sèvres porcelain.

In this "al-fresco" feast the poor captive was not forgotten, but was supplied among the rest—the colossal Quaco administering to his wants with an air of quizzical compassion.

The young Englishman desired enlightenment about the character of his hosts; but delicacy forbade any direct inquiries. Could they be robbers—brigands with black skins? Their arms and accoutrements gave colour to the supposition. *Maroons* they called themselves, but the name was new, and helped not Herbert in his perplexity. "If robbers," thought he, "they are the gentlest of their calling."

* * * * * *

Breakfast over, the Maroons gathered up their traps, and prepared to depart from the spot.

Already the wild boar had been butchered, cut up into portable flitches, and packed away in the cutacoos.

The wales upon the back of the runaway had been anointed by the hand of Quaco with

some balsamic cerate; and by gestures the unfortunate youth was made to understand that he was to accompany the party. Instead of objecting to this, his eyes sparkled with a vivid joy. From the courtesy he had already received at their hands, he could not augur evil.

The Maroons, out of respect to their chief —whom they appeared to treat with submissive deference—had moved some distance away, leaving Captain Cubina alone with his English guest. The latter, with his gun shouldered, stood ready to depart.

"You are a stranger in the island?" said the Maroon, half interrogatively. "I fancy you have not been living long with your uncle?"

"No," answered Herbert. "I never saw my uncle before yesterday afternoon."

"*Crambo!*" exclaimed the hunter-captain in some surprise; "you have just arrived, then? In that case, Master Vaughan—and that is why I have made bold to ask you—you will scarce be able to find your way back to Mount Welcome. One of my people will go with you?"

"No, thank you. I think I can manage it alone."

Herbert hesitated to say that he was not going to Mount Welcome.

"It is a crooked path," urged the Maroon; "though straight enough to one who knows it. You need not take the guide so far as the great house; though Mr. Vaughan, I believe, does not object to our people going on his grounds, as some other planters do. You can leave the man when you get within sight of the place. Without a guide, I fear you will not be able to find the path."

"In truth, Captain Cubina," said Herbert, no longer caring what idea his words might communicate to his Maroon acquaintance, "I don't wish to find the path you speak of. I'm not going that way."

"Not to Mount Welcome?"

"No."

The Maroon remained for a moment silent, while a puzzled expression played over his features. "Only arrived yesterday—out all night in the woods—not going back! Something strange in all this."

Such were the quick reflections that passed through his mind.

He had already noticed an air of distraction—of dejection, too—in the countenance of the stranger. What could it mean? The gay

ribbon knotted in the button-hole of his coat —what could that mean?

Captain Cubina was of the age—and perhaps just then in the very temper—to observe all matters that appeared indications of a certain soft sentiment; and both the blue ribbon and the thoughtful attitude were of that signification. He knew something of the white denizens of Mount Welcome—more, perhaps, of those with a coloured skin. Could the odd behaviour of the young Englishman be attributed to some family difficulty that might have arisen there?

The Maroon mentally answered this interrogatory for himself: with the reflection that something of the kind had occurred.

Perhaps Captain Cubina was not merely guessing! Perhaps he had already listened to some whisper of plantation gossip: for electricity itself can scarce travel faster than news in the negro *quarter!*

If the hunter captain-had any suspicions as to the real position of his woodland guest, he was polite enough not to express them. On the contrary, he waived the opportunity given him by Herbert's ambiguous rejoinder, and simply said—

"If you are going elsewhere, you will need a guide all the same. This glade is surrounded by a wide stretch of tangled woods. There is no good path leading anywhere."

"You are very kind," answered Herbert, touched by the delicate solicitude of this man with a coloured skin. "I wish to reach Montego Bay; and if one of your men would set me on the main road, I should certainly feel under great obligations. As to rewarding him for his trouble, beyond thanking him, I am sorry to say that circumstances just now have placed it out of my power."

"Master Vaughan!" said the Maroon, smiling courteously as he spoke, "were you not a stranger to us and our customs, I should feel offended. You speak as if you expected me to present you with a bill for your breakfast. You seem to forget that, scarce an hour ago, you threw yourself before the muzzle of a pistol to protect the life of a Maroon—a poor outcast mulatto of the mountains! And now — but I forgive you. You know me not——"

"Pardon me, Captain Cubina; I assure you——"

"Say no more! I know your English heart, master—still uncorrupted by vile prejudices of

caste and colour. Long may it rêmain so; and whether Captain Cubina may ever see you again, remember! that up yonder in the Blue Mountain"—the Maroon pointed as he spoke to the purple outline of a mountain ridge, just visible over the tops of the trees—" up yonder dwells a man—a coloured man, it is true, but one whose heart beats with gratitude perhaps as truly as that of the whitest; and should you ever feel the fancy to honour that man with a visit, under his humble roof you will find both a friend and a welcome."

" Thanks!" cried the young Englishman, stirred to enthusiasm by the free friendship of the yellow hunter. "I may some day avail myself of your hospitable offer. Farewell!"

" Farewell!" responded the Maroon, eagerly grasping the hand which Herbert had held out to him. " Quaco!" he cried, calling to his lieutenant, " conduct this gentleman to the main road that leads to the Bay. Farewell, Master Vaughan, and may fortune favour you!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

QUACO.

It was not without regret that Herbert parted with this new friend; and long time was he following upon the heels of Quaco, before he ceased to reflect on the circumstances that had led to his making so singular an acquaintance.

Quaco, being one of the taciturn sort, made no attempt to interrupt Herbert's meditations until the two had walked together for more than a mile. Then, however, some matter upon his mind brought the guide to a halt, and the commencement of a conversation.

"Two tracks from here, buckra. We can follow either; but dis to the right am the shortest—the best road, too."

"Why not take it, then?"

"O—a master; there may be reasons."

"What! for avoiding it?"

"Ya—a!" replied Quaco, in a thoughtful, drawling tone.

"What reasons, friend?"

"Don't you see the roof of a house—just over the tops of them pawpaws?"

"Yes—what of that?"

"That's the baracoon."

"The baracoon?"

"Ya—the penn of de Jew Jess'ron."

"And what if it be?"

"Ah, buckra, what if it be? If we take the path to the right we must pass the Jew's house, and some of his people are sure see us. That John Crow's a justice of the peace, and we may get into trouble."

"Oh! about the affair of the runaway, you mean? Your captain said he belonged to a Mr. Jessuron."

"As much 'bout the dogs as the man. Captain had a right to claim the runaway as his catch; but these Spanish cusses 'll make a muss 'bout thar dogs. They 'll say our captain killed them out o' spite—that they 'll swar to; since it's well known we mountainee men don't like such interlopers here, meddlin' with our business."

"But neither you nor I killed the dogs?"

"Ah, buckra, all the same—you helped—your gun helped kill them. Besides, you

hindered the John Crows from pecking the hawk."

"For what I have done I am not afraid to answer before a justice,—be it this Mr. Jessuron, or any other," said the young Englishman; conscious of having acted rightly in the part he had taken in the quarrel.

"Not much justice to be expected from Justice Jess'ron, master. My advice be to keep out of the hands of justice as long 's we can; and that we can only do by taking the road to the left."

"Will it be much out of our way?" asked Herbert; not caring to greatly inconvenience himself for the reasons set forth by his sable guide.

"Nothing to signify," answered Quaco, though not speaking very truthfully: for the path he intended to take was really much longer than the one leading by Jessuron's house.

"In that case," assented Herbert, "take which way you please!"

Without further parley, Quaco strode forward on the path branching to the left—as before, silently followed by him whom he was guiding.

The track they had taken ran entirely through woods—in some places very difficult to traverse on account of the thorny thickets as well as the unevenness of the ground, which caused the path to be constantly ascending, or trending rapidly downward. At length, however, they arrived at the summit of a high ridge, and were moving onwards amidst groves of pimento, more open than the forest from which they had emerged.

From the top of the ridge, Herbert saw a large house shining against the verdant background of the landscape, which he at once recognized as the mansion of Mount Welcome.

They were not going towards the house, but in a diagonal direction, which would bring them out on the avenue near the entrance gate.

Herbert called out to his guide to make halt. The young man did not like the idea of entering upon the avenue, lest he might encounter some of his uncle's people—a circumstance which he should not wish to have reported at the great house. He therefore requested Quaco to conduct him by some way lying more to the right—so that he might

reach the main road without being seen from Mount Welcome.

The guide yielded compliance, though not without a little grumbling reluctance—as he turned off, muttering some words about giving "as wide a berth as possible to the ole Jew penn."

He obliqued, however, into a new direction; and after another traverse through the woods, Herbert had the satisfaction of finding himself on the main road leading to Montego Bay.

The young Englishman had no farther need of a guide, and Quaco was just on the point of taking leave of him, when at that moment a party of horsemen suddenly made appearance round a bend in the road. There were six or seven in all; and they were riding forward at a rapid pace, as if bent upon some serious business.

At the first sight of these strangers, Quaco shot like an arrow into the underwood—calling upon the buckra to follow his example.

Herbert, however, disdaining to hide himself, remained standing in the middle of the road.

Seeing his determination, Quaco returned to

his side; as he did so, clamorously protesting against the imprudence of his *protégé*.

"Don't like their looks," muttered the Maroon, as he glanced apprehensively towards the horsemen. "It might be—by the Great Accompong it is!—that harpy Ravener, the overseer of Jess'ron. Golly! buckra, we's in for it! No use tryin' to 'scape 'em now."

As Quaco finished speaking, the horsemen rode forward on the ground—one and all halting as they came to the spot where the pedestrians were standing.

"Here's our fellow!" cried the bearded man at their head, whom Herbert easily identified. "Just dropped upon him, like a duck upon a June bug. Now, Mr. Tharpey, do your duty! We'll hear what this young gentleman's got to say before the justice."

"I arrest you, sir," said the person appealed to as Mr. Tharpey. "I am head constable of the parish—I arrest you in the name of the law."

"On what charge?" demanded Herbert, indignantly.

"Mr. Ravener here will bring the charge. I've got nothing to do with that part of it. You must come before the nearest justice. I

reckon the nighest justice from here is the Custos Vaughan?"

This half-interrogatory of the constable was addressed, not to Herbert, but to his own followers. Though it was spoken rather in an undertone, the young man heard it with sufficient distinctness, and with very little complacency. To be carried back into the presence of his uncle—whom he had so lately defied—and in the character of a felon; to be brought, under such humiliating circumstances, before the eyes of his fair cousin—before the eye-glass of his late fellow-passenger—was a prospect that could not fail to be unpleasant.

It was a sort of relief, therefore, when Ravener—who appeared to use some guiding influence over the constable and his *posse comitatus*—overruled the suggestion that Mr. Vaughan was the nearest magistrate, and claimed that honour for Jacob Jessuron, Esq., of the Happy Valley.

After some discussion between the parties upon this moot legal point, the overseer's opinion was adopted: and it was determined that the case should be carried before Justice Jessuron.

Both Herbert and his guide were then formally arrested in the name of the king, and marched off in custody—not without some very vociferous protestations on the part of Quaco, with a long string of threats that he would some day make both constable and overseer pay for this outrage upon the person of a free Maroon.

CHAPTER XXX.

A JAMAICA JUSTICE.

JESSURON, Esquire, held court in the verandah of his dingy dwelling-house, where we have already seen him assisting at a different spectacle.

He was now seated, with a small table before him, covered with a piece of green baize, and carrying a gold snuff-box, an inkstand, pens, and some sheets of paper.

A book or two lay upon the table, one of which, by the lettering upon its cover, proclaimed its title and character—*The Jamaica Justice*. It was bound in black leather—a colour sufficiently emblematic of the chief subject on which it treated: for more than four-fifths of the laws and regulations it contained, related to creatures with black skins.

The Justice was in full costume, as the occasion required—that is, he wore his best blue body-coat with gilt buttons, his drab smallclothes and topboots. The brownish

beaver had been laid aside: as the sanctity of justice requires even the judge's head to be uncovered; but the white cotton skull-cap still remained upon his cranium: justice in Jamaica not being so rigorous as to exact its removal.

With the spectacles well set upon his nose, and his thin face screwed into an expression of pompous importance, Squire Jessuron sate behind his bench, waiting till the parties to the suit should get well into their places.

He was sole justice present; but, of course, it was merely a "preliminary inquiry before a magistrate." To have tried a white criminal on the serious charge brought against Herbert Vaughan, would have required a fuller bench —at least three magistrates, and one of them a custos.

Jessuron's power could go no farther than to *commit* the presumed criminal to prison, until a more formal process should be organized against him.

Herbert had been brought up in front of the table—his captor, the constable, and one or two of the *posse* standing behind him. On the right side appeared Ravener, backed by the two Spanish *caçadores;* the last-mentioned

worthies no longer—as had formerly been their constant custom—attended by their canine companions.

Quaco had been left in the yard below—unguarded—since there was, in reality, no charge against *him.*

There was one other witness to this magisterial trial—the daughter of the Justice himself. Yes, the fair Judith was present—as on all important occasions; but this time not conspicuously so. On the contrary, she was seated in a window that opened on the verandah, her beautiful face half-concealed behind the netted fringe-work of the curtains. The position enabled her to observe what was passing, without formally exposing her own person to view.

Her face was not altogether hidden; and her white shining forehead and dark lustrous eyes, gleaming through the gauzy muslin that veiled them, only appeared more piquantly attractive.

It was evident, from her actions, that the gentle Judith had no intention of remaining unseen. There were several rather good-looking men in the party that accompanied the constable—young planters he had picked up

by the way—and who desired nothing better than a lark of this kind. From the moment that these had entered the courtyard, the fair mistress of the mansion had remained almost constantly by the window.

It was only, however, after the people had got grouped in the gallery, that she took her seat behind the curtain, and entered upon a more minute inspection of their faces and persons.

She was not long engaged in this game, when a change might have been observed passing over her countenance.

At first her eyes had wandered from face to face with rather a sneering, cynical expression —such as the Jewess well knew how to put on. All at once, however, her gaze became fixed; and the contemptuous smile gradually gave place to a look of more serious regard.

By following the direction of her eyes, the object of this regard could easily be discovered. It was the "prisoner at the bar!"

What was the meaning of that gaze? Sympathy for the accused?

She knew why the young man was there. Ravener had already informed her father of all that had transpired, and the daughter had

heard the tale. Was it a generous pity for the position in which this unknown youth was placed, that was now stirring within the breast of the fair Judith, and had produced that sudden change in the expression of her countenance? Hers was hardly the soul for such a sentiment.

Certainly, however, she was actuated by some motive different from the common: for as the trial progressed she no longer looked stealthily from behind the curtain; but having drawn it to one side, she directed her full glance on the stranger, and kept her eyes fixed upon him, apparently regardless of any observation which her conduct might call forth!

Her father, whose back was towards her, saw nothing of this; though it was not unnoticed by the others.

The young Englishman—though little disposed at that moment to the contemplation of aught beyond his own unpleasant position—could not help observing the beautiful face directly opposite to where he stood; nor did he fail to notice the peculiar glances with which he was being regarded.

Was the old man, before whom he stood on

trial, the father of that fair creature at the window? Such was his interrogative reflection, as he glanced inquiringly from one to the other.

Some time had been occupied by the overseer in telling his story—to substantiate the charge he had made. That done, the prisoner was put upon his defence.

"Young man!" said the Justice, "you have heard what thish witness alleges against you. What hash you to say in your defence? And first tell ush what's your name?"

"Herbert Vaughan."

Jessuron re-adjusted his spectacles, and looked at the prisoner with some show of surprise. The bystanders—stolid constable and all—seemed a little startled. Quaco, whose colossal form rose above the railings in the background, uttered a grunt of satisfaction on hearing the young man's name—which he had not known before—a name all-powerful in the district, being that of the mighty Custos himself!

There was one upon whom the words appeared to produce an impression different from that of mere surprise. A glance of anger shot from the dark eyes of the Jewess as she

heard it pronounced, and the look of sympathy for the moment disappeared. Evidently, to her the name was distasteful.

"Herbert Vochan?" repeated the Justice. "Might you be any kinshman of Mishter Vochan of Mount Welcome?"

"His nephew," was the laconic reply.

"Ah! hish nephew! Bless me! ish that true?"

This announcement, as testified by his speech, produced a sudden commotion in the mind of the Jew-justice. From some little that was known of his secret hostility towards his neighbour of Mount Welcome—Ravener knew more than a little—it might have been expected that the discovery of the relationship of the prisoner would have put him in high glee. To be sitting in judgment upon the near kinsman of the Custos—accused of a serious crime, too—was a proud position for Jacob Jessuron, who could remember many a slight he had received from the haughty lord of Mount Welcome. What a splendid *revanche!*

Certainly the manner of the Justice, on learning who was before him, seemed to indicate that such were his reflections. He rubbed his skinny hands together; helped himself

from his gold snuff-box; gleefully smiled from behind his glasses, which were once more shifted upon the sharp ridge of his nose; and then, bending his face forward over the table, he remained for some moments smiling, but silent and thoughtful, as if considering how he should proceed.

After a time he raised his eyes, and freshly scrutinized the prisoner—who had already returned an affirmative answer to his last query.

"Blesh my soul!—I never knew that Mishter Vochan had a nephew! You are from England, young man? Hash your uncle any more English nephews?"

"Not that I am aware of," replied Herbert, frankly. "I believe I am his only relative of that kind—in England, at least."

The proviso in this reply betrayed a significant fact: that the young man was not very well acquainted with the family affairs of his colonial kinsman.

The astute Justice did not fail to notice this deficiency in the nephew's knowledge.

"How long hash you been in Shamaica?" asked he, as if endeavouring to arrive at an explanation of some point that was puzzling him.

"A night, and part of two days—in all, about twenty-four hours," replied Herbert, with scrupulous exactness.

"Blesh my soul!" again exclaimed the Justice; "only twenty-four hours! It'sh a wonder you're not at your uncle's house? You hash been there?"

"Oh, yes," answered Herbert, carelessly.

"You come to shtay at Mount Welcome, I supposhe?"

Herbert made no reply to this interrogatory.

"You shleep there lash night? Excushe me young man, for ashking the question, but ash a magistrate——"

"You are perfectly welcome to the answer, *your worship*," said Herbert, laying a satirical emphasis on the titular phrase; "I did *not* sleep there last night."

"Where did you shleep then?"

"In the woods," answered Herbert.

"Moshesh!" exclaimed the Jew-justice, raising his spectacles in surprise. "In the woods, you shay?"

"In the woods," re-affirmed the young man; "under a tree; and a very good bed I found it," he added, jocosely.

"And did your uncle know of thish?"

"I suppose my uncle knew nothing about it, and as little did he care," replied Herbert, with a reckless indifference as to what answer he gave.

The bitter emphasis on the last words, with the tone in which they were delivered, did not escape the observation of Jessuron. A suspicion had arisen in his mind, that there was something amiss in the relationship between the young man and his uncle; to the comprehension of which, the answer of the former, aided by a knowledge of the character and affairs of the latter, was gradually giving him a clue. A secret joy sparkled in his sunken eyes, as he listened to the last answer given.

All at once he discontinued the direct examination of the prisoner; and, signing to Ravener and the constable to come near, he became engaged with these two worthies in a whispering conversation.

What passed between the trio, the young Englishman could not tell—nor indeed any one else who chanced to be present. The result, however, was to Herbert as pleasant as unexpected.

When Jessuron again returned to address him, a complete change appeared to have taken

place in his manner; and, instead of the frowning Justice, Herbert now saw before him a man who appeared more in the character of a friendly protector—bland, smiling, almost obsequious!

"Mashter Vochan," said he—rising from his magisterial seat, and extending his hand to the prisoner—"you will excush the rough treatment you hash had from thesh people. It ish a great crime in thish country—helping a runaway shlave to eshcape; but as you hash joosh landed, and cannot be ekshpected to know our shtatutes, the law deals mershifully with a firsht offence. Besides, in thish instance, the runaway—who ish one of my own shlaves—did not eshcape. He ish in the hands of the Maroons, and will soon be brought in. The punishment I inflict upon you—and I shall inshist upon its being carried out—ish, that you eats your dinner with me, and—I think that ish punishment enough. Mishter Ravener," added he, calling to his overseer, and at the same time pointing to Quaco, "take that good fellow and see that he ish cared for. Now, Mashter Vochan! pleashe to step inside, and allow me to introshuce you to my daughter Shoodith."

It would have been contrary to all human

nature had Herbert Vaughan not felt gratified at the pleasant turn which this disagreeable affair had taken; and perhaps this gratification was enhanced at the prospect of the proposed introduction. Indeed, no man, however cold his nature, could have looked upon those lovely eyes—so long wistfully watching him from the window—without wishing a nearer acquaintance with their owner.

The angry glance had been evanescent. It was gone long before the conclusion of the trial scene; and as the young Englishman—in obedience to the invitation of his *ci-devant* judge—stepped across the verandah, the fair face, retreating from the window, was suffused with the sweetest and most sympathetic of smiles.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN UNEXPECTED PATRON.

THUS had the chapter of accidents that conducted Herbert Vaughan to the penn of Jacob Jessuron been brought to a very unexpected termination.

But the end was not yet. There was more to come—much more.

Herbert was surprised at the turn things had taken. The only explanation he could think of was, that it was to his uncle's name he was indebted for the honours that were being done to him—a mere neighbourly feeling of the penn-keeper for the great sugar-planter.

"They are friends," thought Herbert, "and this kindness to me is the offspring of that friendship."

The reflection did not give him pleasure, but the contrary. He felt himself in an awkward position—the recipient of a hos-

pitality not meant for himself, but rather for one who had injured him; and who, although his own relative, he now regarded as his enemy.

His uncle would hear of it—no doubt, soon—and would be able to accuse him of taking advantage of his name. The thought caused Herbert a feeling of uneasiness.

Perhaps he would have cared less had there been no one but his uncle to be cognizant of the false position. But there was. His short and troubled visit to Mount Welcome had made Herbert Vaughan acquainted with one whose remembrance was likely for a long time to exert an influence over his thoughts—even though lips as red, and eyes, perhaps, as brilliant as hers, were now smiling courteously upon him.

The memory of his cousin Kate was still mellow. He could fancy her soft, sweet voice yet ringing in his ears; the warm glow of her virgin presence seemed hanging like a halo around him: all urging him to preserve the heroism of his character, if only for the sake of standing well in her estimation.

Influenced by these considerations, he resolved to throw off the mask with which cir-

cumstances had momentarily invested him, and declare the true position in which he stood to his haughty relative.

It was not until the conclusion of the dinner—after the daughter of his host had retired smilingly from the table—that the young Englishman unburdened himself. Then—perhaps a little prompted by the wine—he made a full confession of the disagreeable circumstances existing between himself and the master of Mount Welcome.

Was it the wine—somewhat freely pressed upon him—that hindered him from perceiving the displeasure which his communication had produced upon his hearer? Was there any show of displeasure?

If there was, Herbert did not perceive it.

On the contrary, had the young man been closely observant, he might have noticed an effect of altogether an opposite character. Behind the green goggles, he might have seen those deep dark Israelitish eyes sparkling with joy at the revelation he had made.

"I'm exsheedingly sorry, young Mashter Vochan," said the Jew, after his surprise at Herbert's revelations had apparently subsided—"exsheedingly sorry I ish—to hear that

you and your uncle are not on good terms. Ah! well; we mush hope for the besht; and ash I am one of Mishter Vochan's humble friendsh, possibly I might do somethingsh to reconshile your little quarrel. Doosh you not intend going back to Mount Welcome?"

"Never. After what has passed, never!"

"Ach! youshi musht not be too revengeful. Mishter Vochan ish a proud man; and I musht say he hash behaved badly,—very badly; but still he ish your uncle."

"He has not acted as such."

"That ish true—very true—thish fine gentleman you shpeak of—shtill, that ish no reason why Mishter Vochan should treat hish own nephew so shabby. Well, well—I am sorry—exsheedingly sorry. But, Mashter Herbert," continued the penn-keeper, interrogating his guest with evident interest, "what *dosh* you intend to do? I supposh you hash monish of your own?"

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Jessuron, I have not."

"No monish at all!"

"Not a shilling," affirmed Herbert, with a careless laugh.

"That *ish* bad. Where dosh you think of

going—since you shay you will not return to Mount Welcome?"

"Well," said Herbert, still preserving his air of jocularity, "I was making for the port again, when your worthy overseer and his friends intercepted me—luckily, I may say: since, but for their intervention, I should in all likelihood have gone without dinner to-day—at all events, I should not have dined so sumptuously."

"A wretched dinner, Mashter Vochan—a misherable dinner to what your uncle could have given you. I'm but a poor humble man compared with the Cushtos; but what I hash ish at your service any time."

"Thanks!" said Herbert. "I know not, Mr. Jessuron, how I shall ever repay you for your hospitality. I must not tax it any longer, however. I see, by the sun, it is time I should be making for the Bay."

As Herbert spoke, he was rising to take his departure.

"Shtop, shtop!" cried his host, pushing him back into his chair; "not to-night, Mashter Vochan, not thish night. I can't promish you ash fine a bed as youish might get at Mount Welcome, but I think I can give you

a better ash you shleep in lash night—ha, ha! You musht stay with ush thish night; and Shoodith will make you some music. Don't shay a word; I takesh no refushal."

The offer was a tempting one; and, after some further pressure, Herbert acquiesced in it. He was partly influenced to stay where he was, by the poor prospect of a lodging which the Bay afforded him; and, perhaps, a little from a desire to hear the promised music.

The conversation was continued, by his host putting some further interrogatories:—How did Herbert intend to employ himself in the Bay? What prospect had he of employment; and in what line?

"I fear not much in any *line*," replied the young man, answering both questions in one, and in a tone of sarcastic despondence:

"Hash you no profeshion?"

"Alas, no!" replied Herbert. "It was intended by my father I should have one; but he died before my education was completed; and my college—as is too often the case—has taught me little more than a knowledge of dead languages."

"No ushe—no ushe whatever," rejoined the intelligent Israelite.

"I can draw a landscape," pursued the

young man, modestly, "or paint a portrait tolerably well, I believe—my father himself taught me these accomplishments."

"Ah! Mashter Vochan, neither ish of the shlightest ushe here in Shamaica. If you could paint a house, or a waggon, or a shopkeeper'sh sign, it would bring you more monish than to make the likeneshes of every face in the island. What saysh you to the situation of book-keeper?"

"Unfortunately, I know nothing of accounts. The very useful science of book-keeping I have not been taught."

"Ha! ha! ha!" replied Jessuron, with an encouraging chuckle, "you ish what we, in Shamaica, call *green*, Mashter Vochan. You musht know that a book-keeper here hash no books to keep. He doesh not even put a pen to paper."

"How is that, Mr. Jessuron? I have heard the statement before, though I did not comprehend what was meant by it."

"Then I musht explain, Mashter Vochan. There ish a law here which makes all proprietors of shlaves keep a white man on hish estate for every fifty blacksh. A very shilly law it ish; but it ish a law. Theesh white supernumeraries are called book-keepers: though,

ash I've told you, they keepsh no books. Now you understand what it meansh."

"Then, what duties do they perform?"

"Oh! that depends on circumshtances. Some look after the shlaves, and some do thish and some that. But, egad! now I think of it, Mashter Vochan, I am myshelf in need of a book-keeper. I have joosh bought a new lot of blacksh, and I musht not break the law. I am ushed to give my book-keepers fifty poundsh a-year, currenshy; but if you would be content to accept such a berth, I would make the salary—on account of your uncle—a hundred poundsh a-year. You would also be found in everything elshe. What dosh you shay, Mashter Voehan?"

This unexpected proposal on the part of the penn-keeper, caused his guest to hesitate and reflect.

Not long, however. His forlorn, homeless situation presented itself too forcibly to his mind, to keep him long in doubt as to what answer he should make.

Suffice it to say, that the offer—which to the young Englishman appeared only too generous—was accepted; and from that hour the Happy Valley became his home.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A PLOTTING PARENT.

JACOB JESSURON was never known to be generous without expecting some reward. Never did he fling out a sprat without the expectation of catching a salmon.

What object had he in view in thus becoming the patron and protector of the young Englishman—an outcast adventurer, apparently incapable of making him any return? Why such liberal conditions unasked, and to all appearance unmerited—for, to say the truth, Herbert Vaughan was not the stuff for a *slave-driver*, a term almost synonymous with that of *book-keeper*.

No doubt the Jew had some deep scheme; but in this, as in most other matters, he kept his counsel to himself. Even his "precious Shoodith" was but half-initiated into his designs upon this special subject: though a conversation, which occurred between father and daughter, had placed before the latter some

data calculated to assist her in guessing at them.

The date of this dialogue was upon the morning after Herbert's arrival at the penn.

"Show the young man every kindness, Shoodith dear! Don't shpare pains to pleashe him."

"Why particularly *him*, my worthy parent?"

"Hush! mine Shoodith! Shpeak low, for the luf of Gott! Don't let him hear you talk in that shtyle. Theesh young Englishmen are not ushed to our ways. I hash a reason for being friendly to him."

"What! because he is the nephew of Vanity Vaughan? Is that your reason, rabbi?"

"I shay, shpeak low! He's in his shleeping room, and may hear you. A single word like that you shay might shpoil all my plans."

"Well, father, I'll talk in whispers, if you like. But what *are* your plans? You'll let *me* know them, I suppose?"

"I will, Shoodith, but not shoost now. I hash an idea, mine daughter—a grand idea, it ish! And if all goes right, you, Shoodith, will be the richest woman in Shamaica."

"Oh, I have no objection to that—to be the richest woman in Jamaica, with a prince

for my footman! Who won't envy Judith Jessuron, the daughter of the slave-merchant?"

"Shtay! a word about that, Shoodith dear. In hish presence we musht say as little ash possible upon the subject of shlaves. He musht see no shlave-whipping here—at leasht till he gets ushed to it. Ravener musht be told to behave himshelf. I knowsh of more than one young Englishmans who left his place joosh for that very thing. He needn't go among the field handsh at all. I'll take care of that. But, dearest Shoodith! everything depends on you; and I knowsh you can, if you will."

"Can what, worthy father?"

"Make this young fellow satishfied to shtay with ush."

The look which accompanied these words betokened some other meaning, than what they might have literally conveyed.

"Well," replied Judith, affecting to understand them literally, "I fancy there will not be much difficulty about that. If he's as poor as you say, he'll only be too well pleased to get a good situation, and keep it, too, I should think."

"I'sh not so sure about that. He'sh a young man of a proud spirit. That ish proved by hish leaving his uncle ash he has done—without a shilling in hish pocket—and then to defy the Cushtos faysh to faysh! Blesh my soul! what a foolish young fellow he ish! He must be managed, Shoodith, dear—he must be managed; and you're shoost the one to do it."

"Why, father, to hear you talk, one would think that this poor young Englishman was a rich sugar estate—to be managed for some grand profit——."

"Aha!" exclaimed the other, interrupting her; "maybe yesh—maybe he *ish* a rich sugar estate. We shee—we shee."

"Now, had it been the grand guest of Mount Welcome," continued Judith, without heeding the interruption; "had it been this lord of Montagu Castle that you wished me to *manage*"—at the word the Jewess smiled significantly—"I might have come nearer comprehending you."

"Ah! there is no schance there—no schance whatever, Shoodith."

"No chance of what?" abruptly inquired the Jewess.

"Why, no schance of—that ish——"

"Come, worthy rabbi, speak out! You needn't be afraid to tell me of what you're thinking: I know it already."

"Of what wash I thinking, Shoodith?"

The father put this question rather with a view to escape from an explanation. The daughter instantaneously answered,

"You were thinking, and I suppose still are, that I—your daughter, the child of an old nigger-dealer as you are—would have no chance with this aristocratic stranger who has arrived—this Mr. Montagu Smythje. That's your thought, Jacob Jessuron?"

"Well, Shoodith, dear! you know he ish to be the guesht of the Cushtos; and the Cushtos, ash I hash reason to know, hash an eye on him for his own daughter. Miss Vochan is thought a great belle, and it would be no ushe for ush to ashpire——"

"She a belle!" exclaimed the Jewess, with a proud toss of her head, and a slight upturning of her beautiful spiral nostril; "she was not the belle of the last ball at the Bay—not she, indeed; and as for *aspiring*, the daughter of a slave-dealer is at least equal

to the daughter of a slave—maybe a slave herself——"

"Hush, Shoodith! not a word about that—not a whisper in the hearing of thish young man. You know he ish her cousin. Hush!"

"I don't care if he was her brother," rejoined the Jewess, still speaking in a tone of spiteful indignation—for Kate Vaughan's beauty was Judith Jessuron's especial fiend; "and if he were her brother," continued she, "I'd treat him worse than I intend to do. Fortunately for him, he's only her cousin; and as he has quarrelled with them all, I suppose—has he said anything of *her?*"

The interrogatory was put as if suggested by some sudden thought—and the questioner seemed to wait with considerable anxiety for the answer.

"Of hish cousin Kate, you mean?"

"Why, who should I mean!" demanded Judith, bluntly. "There is no other *she* in Mount Welcome the young fellow is likely to be talking about; nor you either—unless, indeed, you've still got that copper-coloured wench in your head. Of course, it's Kate Vaughan I mean. What says he of her? He must have seen her—short as his visit

seems to have been; and, if so, you must have talked about her last night—since you sat late enough to have discussed the whole scandal of the island."

With all this freedom of verbiage, the Jewess seemed not to lose sight of the original interrogatory; and her frequent repetition of it was rather intended to conceal the interest with which she looked for the answer. If her words did not betray that interest, her looks certainly did: for, as she bent forward to listen, a skilled observer might have detected in her eyes that sort of solicitude which springs from a heart where the love-passion is just beginning to develope itself—budding, but not yet blooming.

"True, Shoodith, true," admitted the slave-merchant, thus bantered by his own bold offspring. "The young man did shpeak of hish cousin; for I hash a wish to know what wash hish opinion of her, and ashked him. I wash in hopes he had quarrelled with her too; but, ach! no—he hashn't—he hashn't."

"What might that signify to you?"

"Moch, moch, daughter Shoodith; a great deal."

"You're a mysterious old man, father Jacob;

and, though I've been studying you for nearly a score of years, I don't half understand you yet. But what did he say of Kate Vaughan? He saw her, I suppose?"

"Yesh. He had an interview with her. He saysh she behaved very kind to him. He'sh not angry with *her*. S'help me, no!"

This information appeared to produce no very pleasant impression upon the Jewess; who, with her eyes downcast upon the floor, remained for some moments in a thoughtful attitude.

"Father," she said, in a tone half serious, half in simplicity, "the young fellow has got a bit of blue ribbon in his button-hole. You have noticed it, I suppose? I am curious to know what he means by wearing that. Is it an order, or what? Did he tell you?"

"No. I notished it; but, ash he shayed nothings about it, I did not ashk him. It'sh no order—nothing of the kind. His father was only a poor artisht."

"I wonder where he procured that piece of ribbon?" said Judith, speaking in a low tone, and half in soliloquy.

"You can ashk him for yourself, Shoodith. There ish no harm in that."

"No, not I," answered Judith, suddenly changing countenance, as if ashamed of having shown the weakness of curiosity. "What care I for him, or his ribbon?"

"No matter for that, Shoodith, dear; no matter for that, if youish can make him *care for you.*"

"Care for *me!* What, father! do you want him to fall in love with me?"

"Joosh that—joosh so."

"For what reason, pray?"

"Don't ash know. I hash a purpose. You shall know it in good time, Shoodith. You make him in luff with you—over head and earsh, if you like."

The counsel did not appear averse to her who received it. Anything but displeasure was in her looks as she listened to it.

"But what," asked she, after a reflective pause, and laughing as she spake, "what if, in luring him, I should myself fall into the lure? They say that the tarantula is sometimes taken in its own trap."

"If you succeed in catching your fly, mine goot shpider Shoodith, that won't signify.

So much the better ish that. But fusht catch your fly. Don't let go the shtrings of your heart, till you hash secured hish; and then you may do as you pleashe about falling in luff with him. Hush! I hear him coming from hish shamber. Now, Shoodith dear, show him every reshpect. Shower on him your sweetest of shmiles!"

And terminating the dialogue with this parental injunction, Jacob Jessuron walked off to conduct his guest into the great hall.

"Ah! worthy father!" said Judith, looking after him with a singular expression upon her countenance, "for once, you may find me a dutiful daughter; though not for you or your purpose—whatever that may be. I have my suspicion of what it is. No: not for that either—grand destiny as it might be deemed. There is something grander still—a passion perilous to play with; and just for that peril shall I play with it. Ha—he comes! How proud his step! He looks the master, and yon old Israelite his overseer—his book-keeper—ha! ha! ha!"

"Ach!" she exclaimed, suddenly checking her laughter, and changing her smile to a

frown; "the ribbon! he wears it still! What can it mean? No matter now! Ere long I shall unravel the skein of its silken mystery—even if this heart should be torn in the attempt!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ANOTHER OF THE SAME.

On that same morning, and about the same hour, a scene of remarkable parallelism was passing at Mount Welcome. Loftus Vaughan was holding dialogue with his daughter, as Jacob Jessuron with Judith—the subject very similar—the motives of planter and penn-keeper equally mean.

"You have sent for me, papa?" said Kate, entering the great hall in obedience to a summons from her father.

"Yes, Catherine," replied Mr. Vaughan, in a tone of unwonted gravity.

The grave tone was not needed. The "Catherine" was enough to tell Kate that her father was in one of his serious moods: for it was only when in this vein, that he ever pronounced her baptismal name in full.

"Sit down there," he proceeded, pointing to a fauteuil in front of where he was himself seated. "Sit down, my daughter, and listen:

I have something of importance to say to you."

The young lady obeyed in silence, and not without a little of that reluctant *gaucherie* which patients display when seating themselves in front of a physician, or a naughty child composing itself to listen to the parental lecture.

The natural gaiety of "Lilly Quasheba" was not easily restrained; and though the unusual gravity depicted in her father's face might have checked it, the formality with which he was initiating the interview had an opposite effect. At the corners of her pretty little mouth might have been observed something that resembled a smile.

Her father did observe something that resembled it.

"Come, Catherine!" said he, reprovingly, "I have called you out to talk over a serious matter. I expect you to listen seriously, as becomes the subject."

"Oh! papa, how can I be serious, till I know the subject? You are not ill, I hope?"

"Tut, no—no. It has, nothing to do with my health—which, thank Providence, is good enough—nor yours neither. It is our wealth,

not our health, that is concerned—our wealth, Catherine!"

The last phrase was uttered with emphasis, and in a confidential way, as if to enlist his daughter's sympathies upon the subject.

"Our wealth, papa? I hope nothing has happened? You have had no losses?"

"No, child," replied Mr. Vaughan, now speaking in a fond, parental tone; "nothing of the sort, thanks to fortune, and perhaps a little to my own prudence. It is not losses I am thinking about, but gains."

"Gains!"

"Aye, gains—gains, Catherine, which you can assist me in obtaining."

"I, papa? How could I assist you? I know nothing of business—I am sure I know nothing."

"Business! ha! ha! It's not business, Kate. The part which you will have to play will be one of pleasure—I hope so, at least."

"Pray tell me what it is, papa! I am sure I'm fond of pleasure at all times—everybody knows that."

"Catherine!" said her father, once more adopting the grave tone, "do you know how old you are?"

"Certainly, papa! at least, what I have been told. Eighteen—just past last birthday."

"And do you know what young girls should, and generally do, think about, when they come to be of that age?"

Kate either affected or felt profound ignorance of the answer she was expected to make.

"Come!" said Mr. Vaughan, banteringly, "you know what I mean, Catherine?"

"Indeed, papa, I do not. You know I keep no secrets from you; you taught me not. If I had any, I would tell them to you."

"I know you're a good girl, Kate. I know you would. But that is a sort of secret I should hardly expect you to declare—even to me, your father."

"Pray what is it, papa?"

"Why, at your age, Kate, most girls—and it is but right and natural they should—take to thinking about a young man."

"Oh! that is what you mean! Then I can answer you, papa, that I *have* taken to thinking about one."

"Ha!" ejaculated Mr. Vaughan, in a tone of pleased surprise; "you have, have you?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Kate, with an air

of the most innocent *naïveté*. "I have been thinking of one—and so much, that he is scarce ever out of my mind."

"Ha!" said the Custos, repeating his exclamation of surprise, and rather taken aback by a confession so unexpectedly candid. "Since how long has this been, my child?"

"Since how long?" rejoined Kate, musingly.

"Yes. When did you first begin to think of this young man?"

"Oh! the day before yesterday, after dinner—ever since I first saw him, father."

"*At* dinner you first saw him," said Mr. Vaughan, correcting his daughter. "But, no matter for that," he continued, gleefully rubbing his hands together, and not noticing the puzzled expression upon Kate's countenance. "It might be, that you did not think of him in the first moments of your introduction. It's not often people do. A little bashfulness has to be got over. And so then, Kate, you like him *now*—you think you like him now?"

"Oh! father, you may be sure I do—better than any one I ever saw—excepting yourself, dear papa."

"Ah! my little chit, that's a different sort

of liking — altogether different. The one's love—the other is but filial affection—each very well in its place. Now, as you're a good girl, Kate, I have a bit of pleasant news for you."

"What is it, papa?"

"I don't know whether I should tell you or not," said the Custos, playfully patting his daughter upon the cheek; "at least, not now, I think. It might make you too happy."

"Oh, papa! I have told you what you wished me; and I see it has made you happy. Surely you will not conceal what you say will do the same for me? What is the news?"

"Listen, then, Kate!"

Mr. Vaughan bending forward, as if to make his communication more impressive, pronounced in a whisper:—

"He reciprocates your feeling—*he likes you!*"

"Father, I fear he does not," said the young creole, with a serious air.

"He does—I tell you so, girl. He's over head and ears in love with you. I know it. In fact, I saw it from the first minute. A blind man might have perceived it; but then

a blind man can see better than a young lady that's in love. Ha! ha! ha!"

Loftus Vaughan laughed long and loudly at the jest he had so unexpectedly perpetrated: for at that moment he was in the very mood for merriment. His dearest dream was about to be realised: Montagu Smythje was in love with his daughter. That he knew before. Now his daughter had more than half admitted—in fact, quite confessed—that she liked Smythje; and what was *liking* but *love?*

"Yes, Kate," said he, as soon as his exultation had to some extent subsided, "you are blind, you little silly—else you might have seen it before. His behaviour would show how much he cares for you."

"Ah! father, I think that his behaviour would rather show that he cares not for either of us. He is too proud to care for any one."

"What! too proud? Nonsense! it's only his way. Surely he has not shown anything of that to you, Kate?"

"I cannot blame him," continued the young girl, still speaking in a serious tone. "The fault was not his. Your treatment of him, father—you must not be angry at me

for telling you of it—now that I know all, dear papa—was it not enough to make him act as he has done?"

"My treatment of him!" cried the Custos, with a self-justifying, but puzzled look. "Why, child, you rave! I could not treat him better, if I was to try ever so. I have done everything to entertain him, and make him feel at home here. As to what *he* has done, it's all nonsense about his pride: at least, with us he has shown nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he is acting admirably throughout the whole matter. Certainly, no man could behave with more politeness to you than Mr. Smythje is doing?"

"Mr. Smythje!"

The entrance of this gentleman at the moment prevented Mr. Vaughan from noticing the effect which the mention of his name had produced: an unexpected effect, as might have been seen by the expression which Kate's features had suddenly assumed.

But for that interruption—hindering the *éclaircissement* which, no doubt, his daughter would on the instant have made—Mr. Vaughan might have sat down to breakfast with his appetite considerably impaired.

His guest requiring all his attention, caused him to withdraw suddenly from the dialogue; and he appeared neither to have heard the exclamatory repetition of Smythje's name, nor the words uttered by Kate in a lower tone, as she turned towards the table:—

"*I thought it was Herbert!*"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A SWEETHEART EXPECTED.

THE departure of the young Englishman, under the conduct of Quaco, was a signal for the black band to disperse.

At a word from their chief, they broke up into knots of two or three individuals each; and went off in different directions—disappearing amid the underwood as silently as they had emerged from it.

Cubina alone remained in the glade; the captured runaway cowering upon a log beside him.

For some minutes, the Maroon captain stood resting upon his gun — which one of his followers had brought up—his eyes fixed upon the captive. He appeared to be meditating what course he should pursue in relation to the unfortunate slave; and the shadow upon his countenance told that some thought was troubling him.

The Maroon captain felt himself in a

dilemma. His duty was in conflict with his desires. From the first, the face of the captive had interested him; and now that he had time to scan it more narrowly, and observe its noble features, the idea of delivering him up to such a cruel master, as he whose initials he bore upon his breast, became all the more repugnant.

Duty demanded him to do so. It was the law of the land—one of the terms of the treaty by which the Maroons were bound—and disobedience to that law would be certain to meet with punishment stringent and severe.

True, there was a time when a Maroon captain would have held obedience to this law more lightly; but that was before the conquest of Trelawney town—or rather its traitorous betrayal—followed by the basest banishment recorded among men.

That betrayal had brought about a change. The Maroons who had avoided the forced exile, and still remained in the mountain fastnesses, though preserving their independence, were no longer a powerful people—only a mere remnant, whose weakness rendered them amenable, not only to the laws of the island,

but to the tyranny and caprice of such planter-justices as might choose to persecute them.

Such was the position of Cubina and his little band, who had established themselves in the mountains of Trelawney.

With the Maroon captain, therefore, it was a necessity as well as a duty, to deliver up the runaway captive. Failing to do so, he would place his own liberty in peril. He knew this, without the threat which Ravener had fulminated in such positive terms.

His interest also lay in the line of his duty. This also he could understand. The captive was a prize for which he would be entitled to claim a reward—the *bounty*.

Not for a moment was he detained by this last consideration. The prospect of the reward would have had no weight with him whatever; it would not even have cost him a reflection, but that, just then, and for a very singular purpose, Cubina required money.

This purpose was revealed in a soliloquy that at that moment escaped from his lips.

"*Crambo!*" he muttered, using an exclamation of the Spanish tongue, still found in a corrupted form among the Maroons; "if it wasn't that I have to make up the purchase-money

of Yola—*Por Dios!* he is as like to Yola as if he was her brother! I warrant he is of the same nation—perhaps of her tribe. Two or three times he has pronounced the word *Foolah*. Besides, his colour, his shape, his hair—all like hers. No doubt of it, he's a Foolah."

The last word was uttered so loud as to reach the ear of the runaway.

"Yah! Foolah, Foolah!" he exclaimed, turning his eyes appealingly upon his captor. "No slave—no slave!" added he, striking his hand upon his breast as he repeated the words.

"Slave! no slave!" echoed the Maroon, with a start of surprise; "that's English enough. They've taught him the ugly word."

"Foolah me—no slave!" again exclaimed the youth, with a similar gesture to that he had already made.

"Something curious in this," muttered the Maroon, musingly. "What can he mean by saying he is no slave—for that is certainly what he is trying to say? Slave he must be; else how did he get here? I've heard that a cargo has been just landed, and that the old Jew got most or all of them. This young fellow must be one of that lot. Very likely

he's picked up the words aboard ship. Perhaps he is speaking of what he was in his own country. Ah, poor devil! he'll soon find the difference here!

"*Santos Dios!*" continued the Maroon, after a pause, in which he had been silently regarding the countenance of the newly-arrived African. "It's a shame to make a slave of such as he—a hundred times more like a freeman than his master. Poor fellow! it's a hard row he'll have to hoe. I feel more than half-tempted to risk it, and save him from such a fate."

As this half-determination passed through the mind of the Maroon, a noble and proud expression came over his features.

"If they had not seen him in my possession;" he continued to reflect; "but the overseer and those Spanish poltroons know all, and will——Well, let them!—at all events I shall not take him back till I've seen Yola. No doubt she can talk to him. If he's Foolah she can. We'll hear what he's got to say, and what this 'no slave' means."

On saying this, the speaker turned his eyes upward; and appeared for some moments to scan the sun.

"Good," he exclaimed. "It is near the hour. I may expect her at any moment. Oh! I must have him out of sight, and these dead dogs, too, or my timid pet will be frayed. There's been so much doing about here—blood and fire—she will scarcely know the old trysting-place. Hark you, Foolah! Come this way, and squat yourself in here till I call you out again."

To the runaway the gestures of his captor were more intelligible than his words. He understood by them that he was required to conceal himself between the buttresses of the *ceiba;* and, rising from the log, he readily obeyed the requisition.

The Maroon captain seized the tail of one of the dead bloodhounds; and, after trailing the carcase for some distance across the glade, flung it into a covert of bushes.

Returning to the *ceiba,* in a similar manner he removed the other; and then, once more cautioning the runaway to remain silent in his concealment, he awaited the approach of her who had given him assignation.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A LOVE SCENE UNDER THE CEIBA.

THE lover who is beloved need never fear disappointment. True to her tryst, and punctual to the time, did the expected sweetheart make her appearance within the glade.

With shy but graceful mien, she advanced towards the *ceiba*, and with sufficient firmness of step to show that she came not in doubt. A smile, confident and slightly coquettish, dancing in her dark eyes, and playing upon her prettily-curved lips, told of a love already plighted—at the same time betokening full faith in the vows that had been exchanged.

Cubina stepped forth to receive her; and the lovers met in the open ground, at some distance from the tree. Their demeanour at meeting told that it was not their first assignation; but that ofttimes before had they been together in that same rendezvous.

The presence of the runaway—not seen,

however, from the spot—did not hinder Cubina from saluting his sweetheart with a kiss, nor prevent him from folding her for a short moment in his arms.

That spasm of exquisite pleasure passed, the dialogue began.

The girl spoke first.

"Oh, Cubina! news I have tell."

"Come, my love—what news? Ah! you are looking grave, Yola; your news is not very joyful, I fear?"

"No, not joyful—bad news."

"Let me hear them, love. Something Cynthy has been saying to you? You shouldn't heed what that girl says."

"No, Cubina, I no care what her me tell. I her know, wicked, bad girl. Not Cynthy say that thing me trouble now. Missa Kate me tell."

"Ah! something Miss Vaughan has told you? I wouldn't look for bad news from her. But what is it, dear Yola? Maybe, after all, it's nothing?"

"Ah! yes, Cubina, something. I fear me keep from you long, long time."

"Keep you from me! Surely Miss Vaughan don't object to your meeting me?"

"No—not that. Something I fear me hinder from be——."

"Be what?" inquired the lover, seeing that his sweetheart hesitated to pronounce some word, the thought of which was causing her to blush. "Come, dear Yola, don't fear to tell *me*. You know we're engaged. There should be no secret between us. What were you going to say?"

In a low, murmured voice, and looking lovingly in his eyes as she spoke, the girl pronounced the word "marry."

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed the lover, in a confident tone. "I think nothing can occur to hinder that—at least, for a very long time. I have now nearly a hundred pounds laid by, and a lucky capture I've just made this morning will help still further to make up that sum. Surely the Custos will not require more than a hundred pounds; though if you were once mine," continued the speaker, casting a look of smiling fondness upon his sweetheart's face, "all the money in the world wouldn't tempt me to part with you. I hope," added he, speaking in a jocular air, "a hundred pounds will be enough to make you *my slave?*"

"You slave, Cubina?"

"Yes, Yola, as I am yours now."

"Ah—that way, Yola yours; yours ever—evermore."

"I will believe you, dear girl," rejoined the lover, gazing, with a gratified look, in the face of his beloved. "I am very happy to think that in that way you are mine; and that I have, as you assure me, your heart and soul. But, dearest Yola, so long as another is the owner of your body—not with the right, but the power to do, aye—indeed, almost as he might please—for who can hinder these proud planters from committing crimes of which they are their own judges? Ah! Yola, girl, it is fearful to reflect on their wicked doings. This very morning I have come across a sample of their cruelty; and when I think of you being in the power of one, it makes me feel as if every hour was a day until I can obtain your freedom. I am always in fear lest something may happen to hinder me.

"Just to-day I am in high hopes," continued the lover, evincing the truth of his words by a pleasant smile. "I have succeeded in raising nearly the hundred pounds; and

the bounty I expect to receive for the runaway I have caught will make it quite that."

The girl returned no reply to this speech of her lover, but stood gazing upon him silently, and as if half reproachfully. Something of this kind he read, or fancied he read, in her looks.

"What, Yola, you are not satisfied with what I have said? You reproach me? Ah! true. I confess it is not a very creditable way of procuring your purchase-money. *Maldito!* what can I do? We Maroons have no other way of raising money, except by hunting the wild hogs, and selling their barbecued flesh. But that barely gives us a living. *Crambo!* I could never have got together a hundred pounds in that way. So do not reproach me, dear Yola, for what I've done. I assure you it goes against my grain, this man-hunting business. As for the young fellow I caught this morning, I'd risk a good real rather than give him up—if it wasn't for the purpose of procuring your freedom. For that I must have the hundred pounds, which it is to be hoped will be enough to satisfy your master."

"Ah, Cubina!" replied his slave-love, with

a sigh, "that the bad news I you bring. Hundred pound no more enough. Only two days go, he have him offer twice so much for poor slave Yola."

"Two hundred pounds offered for *you!*" exclaimed the Maroon, with a start of surprise, his brow becoming suddenly clouded. "Is that what you mean, Yola?"

"Ah, yes!" answered the slave, repeating her sad sigh.

"And who—who is he?" demanded the lover, in a quick earnest tone, at the same time that a gleam of jealous thought flashed from his dark eyes, like forked lightning across a clouded sky.

He knew that no man would have bid two hundred pounds for a slave—even for Yola—without some wicked motive. The girl's beauty, combined with the extravagant offer, would have suggested the motive to one disinterested in her fate. How much more was it calculated to arouse the suspicions of a lover!

"A white man," continued he, without waiting for the reply to his first question. "I need not ask that. But tell me, Yola, who

is he that's so desirous of becoming your owner. You know, I suppose."

"Missa Kate me tell all. He Jew—wicked white man! Same who me take from big ship; and me first sell Massa Vaughan."

"Ha!" sharply ejaculated the lover, "that old wretch it is? Wicked white man you may well call him. I know the old villain well. *Crambo!* what can he want with her?" muttered the Maroon, musingly, but with a troubled mien. "Some vile purpose, to a certainty? Oh, sure!" Then once more addressing himself to his slave sweetheart—

"You are certain, Yola, the old Jew made this offer?"

"So me say young missa."

"Two hundred pounds! And Mr. Vaughan refused it?"

"Missa Kate no allow Massa Vaughan me sell. She say 'Never!' Ah! young missa! she good for say so! No matter what money he give, she never let wicked white man buy Yola. She so say many time."

"Miss Kate said this? Then she is good, she is generous! It must have been her doing, else the Custos would never have refused such

a tempting offer. Two hundred pounds! It is a large sum. Well, I must begin again. I must work night and day to get it. And then, if they should refuse *me!* Ha! what then?"

The speaker paused, not as if expecting a reply from her who stood by his side, but rather from his own thoughts.

"Never mind!" continued he, his countenance assuming an expression partly hopeful, partly reckless. "Have no fear of the future, Yola. Worst come worst, you shall yet be mine. Aye, dearest, you shall share my mountain home, though I may have to make it the home of an outlaw!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the young girl, slightly frayed by the wild look and words of her lover. her eye at the same instant falling upon the red pool where the hounds had been slain. "Blood, Cubina?"

"Only that of some animals—a wild boar and two dogs—just killed there. Don't let that frighten you, pet. You must be brave, my Yola; since you are to be the wife of a Maroon! Ours is a life of many dangers."

"With you Yola no fear. She go any-

where—far over the mountains—to Jumbé Rock—anywhere you her take, Cubina."

"Thanks, dearest! Maybe, some day, we may be forced to go far over the mountains—in *flight, too,* Yola. But we shall try to avoid that. If your master will only act right, there will be no need. If not, then you will fly with me—will you not?"

"What Cubina do, Yola do same; where he go, she go."

The passionate promise was sealed by a kiss, followed by an interval of sacred silence.

"Enough, then!" said the lover, after the pause had passed. "As a last resource, we can do that. But we shall hope for the best; and, maybe, some good fortune may befall. My followers are true, and would help me; but, alas! all are poor hunters, like myself. Well, it may take some time before I can call you my own fearlessly, in the face of the world—longer, maybe, than I expected. Never mind for that; we can meet often. And now, dear Yola, listen to what I am going to say to you—listen, and keep it in your mind! If ever a white man insults you—you know what I mean?—if you are in danger of such a thing

—as you would have been, were old Jessuron to become your master—aye, and who knows how, where, or when?—well, then, fly to this glade, and wait here for me. If I do not come, some one will. Every day I shall send one of my people to this place. Don't fear to run away. Though I may not care to get into trouble about a common slave, I shall risk all to protect you—yes, my life, dearest Yola!"

"Oh, Cubina!" exclaimed the girl, in passionate admiration. "Oh, brave, beauty Cubina! you not fear danger?"

"There is no great danger in it," returned the Maroon, in a confident tone. "If I had made up my mind to run away with you, I could soon take you beyond the reach of pursuit. In the *Black Grounds* we could live without fear of the tyranny of white men. But I don't want to be hunted like a wild hog. I would rather you should become mine by honest means—that is, I would rather buy you, as I intend to do; and then we may settle down near the plantations, and live without apprehension. Perhaps, after all, the Custos may not be so hard with me as with the old Jew—who knows? Your young mis-

tress is kind, you have told me: she may do something to favour our plans."

"True, Cubina—she me love; she say never me part."

"That is well; she means, she would not part with you against your will. But if I offer to buy you, it would be a different thing. Perhaps you might let her know all, after a while. But I have something to learn first, and I don't wish you to tell her till then So keep our secret, dear Yola, for a little longer.

"And now," continued the Maroon, changing his tone, and turning towards the *ceiba* as he spoke, "I've got something to show you. Did you ever see a runaway?"

"Runaway!" said the girl; "no, Cubina —never."

"Well, my love, there's one not far off; he that I said I had captured this morning—only a little while ago. And I'll tell you why I've kept him here: because I fancied that he was like yourself, Yola."

"Like me?"

"Yes; and that is why I felt for the poor fellow something like pity: since it is to this

cruel old Jew he belongs. From what I can make out, he must be one of your people; and I'm curious to know what account he will give of himself."

"He Foolah, you think?" inquired the African maiden, her eyes sparkling with pleasure at the anticipation of seeing one of her own race.

"Yes; I am as good as sure of that. In fact, he has called himself a Foolah several times, though I can't make out what he says. If he is one of your tribe, you will be able to talk to him. There he is!"

Cubina had by this time conducted his sweetheart round the tree, to that side on which the runaway was concealed between the two spurs.

The young man was still crouching within the angle, close up to the trunk of the *ceiba*. The moment the two figures came in front of him, and his eyes fell upon the face of the girl, he sprang to his feet, uttering a cry of wild joy. Like an echo, Yola repeated the cry; and then both pronouncing some hurried phrases in an unknown tongue, rushed together, and became folded in a mutual embrace!

Cubina stood transfixed to the spot. Surprise—something more—held him speechless. He could only think:—

"She knows him! Perhaps her lover in her own land!"

A keen pang of jealousy accompanied the thought.

Rankling it remained in the breast of the Maroon, till Yola, untwining her arms from the fond embrace, and pointing to him who had received it, pronounced the tranquillizing words:—

"*My brother!*

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